

BRITAIN'S ONLY SCIENCE STORY WEEKLY

# SCOOPS

The STORY  
PAPER of  
TO-MORROW

2d

EVERY THURSDAY

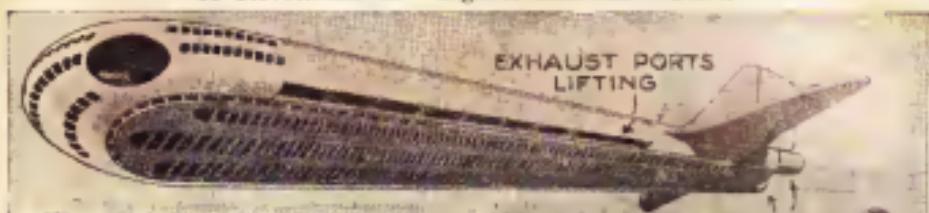
The  
**HUMMING  
HORROR**  
*See Inside*

E.P.R.

The VACUUM DIRIGIBLE Heralds—

# The "No-Air" AIRSHIP

A Revolution in "Lighter-than-Air" Craft.



**E**XPERIMENTERS are once more toying with the idea of a Vacuum Dirigible—craft that gains its lift by the buoyancy of a vacuum.

Long before the creation of the Blimp-like air balloon, and long before it was discovered that air has weight, an ingenious dreamer, the Rev. Francis Laten, said he suggested that the buoyancy of a vacuum might be used to make an aerial craft, and a sketch of his proposed vessel is shown in the margin alongside.

This was the first real scientific suggestion for a "Lighter-than-air" craft.

More than thirty years ago a writer of "Fiction Stories," pseud. his hero, "John Smith," was toying with the idea of a balloon which gained its power of flight by exhausting the air from the ball, instead of filling it with gas. The difficulty, of course, is that a thin silk ball may be filled with hydrogen and lift thirteen pounds, but to gain another pound lift, through a vacuum, it would be necessary to remove it, like a submarine, with metal plates. The "stale" vacuum ship, therefore, can never be a success.

Nevertheless, as the illustrations on the page show, we may carry on with the idea. The dirigible may be operated by maintaining a vacuum in a chamber partially enclosed. As a matter of fact, any aeronaut directs the lift from the creation of a partial vacuum above the wing, as well as an increased pressure below it.

The craft illustrated here has an engine with a cylinder with a revolving fan at the exhaust type. The chamber is closed by sliding doors, so it is exhausted of air, and the fans are set to work. A large quantity of air is then taken into these rapidly revolving doors, admitting a small quantity of air, and, as the large ports open, a rush of air is forced out all about at high velocity.

Atmospheric pressure equals a ton to the square foot, a small amount of air is sufficient to lift a given structure. The air rises with the balloons revolving at certain speeds, but as the air pressure decreases with altitude, the input of air must be increased.

The action of air below and at the sides makes practically a reaction or rocket-type motion.

If such a craft is possible—and we can see no reason why it should not be—it would bring about a revolution in "lighter-than-air" craft.

**REVOLVING FAN BLADES MAINTAIN CONSTANT SPEED**

**FLY WHEELS HAVE GYROSCOPIC ACTION**

**GEARS DRIVE FANS**

**PORTS OPENED BY ROTATING SLEEVES**

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# The HUMMING HORROR

JUST A MURMUR OF SOUND—  
but it Sent half the World Crazy,  
and Brought the Metal Men of Zog



As the scientists watched, an intense beam of yellow light flooded out from the body of the metal man and resolved itself into a huge circle of light in which floated an image of the planet Saturn.

What you do to the confused art, Mac?"

Dick McVally, the big Scot, was nervous, fat and fussy—had his finger on the tip of the nosebridge and looked over his glasses at the fire out two of many windows.

"Wang! Blah!" Mac's air of indecision always surprised the explorer O'Sullivan.

"I suppose you can't hear it. That how I've lived, though—just I can't get rid of it."

"Hush!" Conan, my! I've heard it. Perhaps it's millions. Turn down the volume."

"I've turned it down," snapped Jim, as he stared with the others, "but it makes no difference."

In spite of his efforts the hum went on, low and constant.

"You think it's a valve?" began Jim.

"The sat's perfect," Mac took the pipe out of his mouth and blew a cloud of smoke into the air. "But have it in bits of you like. Or, better still, ring up the B.C.C., and ask them what they're going to do about it. Please, please, now, but let a body rest in peace."

Jim switched off the radio set in disgust. He did not ring up the B.C.C., but read newspaper first, and his burning red face seemed to stand on end.

"Blah it!" he exploded, ringing out the paper he had been reading. "What

the engineers at the B.C.C. had been shaping Transmunt, created apparatus, over the radio nests at Bradenton Park and in other parts of the country had been overwhelmed. But the source of the mysterious hum could not be traced.

Transmunt being some powerful station had at long last registered, but the idea was abandoned, and the mystery grew when it was learned that the hum was being experienced on all continents.

McVally and O'Sullivan consulted their friend, Greville Mallory, in the laboratory of the New Research Board, where they were working at the time.

Mallory, that great, waggish-looking man with a shock of curly hair big and ugly, men and ladies thought him like a combination of Television, Radio, the Cinema, the Coal, Metal and Oil Industries all rolled, their progress and power offering to the invention and requirements of Greville Mallory.

"Well, what did you make of it, Mac?" asked the scientist. "I didn't hear it at all. Playing bridge?"

"I'm no sure," answered Mac cautiously. "I was at first inclined to think it was due to some astronomical disturbance, or perhaps some disturbance from space, but I'm no so certain now. To see, report any it you know, as all wave-lengths, and ye know that the long radio waves cannot get through the B.C.C. and F waves around the Earth. Therefore, they cannot get through from the other side."

"That's right enough," agreed Mallory. "But you're only surmising that they are radio waves. Electrical disturbance can cause

## ★ THE WORLD HUMS

**I**T was a low, pleasant little murmur, a murmur like that sometimes caught up with the hum of the dance music in a cool, delightful way.

But it irritated little Jim O'Sullivan, the wily, diminutive assistant of Greville Mallory, one of the world's most famous scientists and inventors.

It took little to upset the dry Mallory, and just now there was a twinkle in his sharp-bordered face, and his burning red face seemed to stand on end.

"Blah it!" he exploded, ringing out the paper he had been reading. "What

Great Story by SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE . . . In SCOOPS next week. See page 379

## The Metal Man Of Zog

**Interference.** Perhaps a very intense radio signal over Britain last night caused the haze. By the way, did any other country get the disturbance? What were the reports from the Continental stations?

"The reports don't say," answered Jim. "We'll probably hear to night."

"I'm wondering if the haze's still on the air," said Mr. Lee, who was seen in a portable set in the laboratory and watched on.

A faint talk came through, muffled and clear with no trace of haze or anything else in the way of interference.

"There you are," said Mallory. "A very powerful and unusual electrical storm last night."

With them they discussed the matter from their minds, and got down to the work of the morning.

But the master was brought in there at twelve again that night, for at about 3:30 p.m. the haze slowly broke into the atmosphere again. This time it was, if anything, heavier than it had been before.

And in the evening papers were reports of similar radio interference from all over the world.

The British Radio Research Station got to work亟ily, and discovered that a bulk of interference was circling the world, lasting for about two hours at a time in any given spot.

It was on one occasion, very low D.F. and in no part of the world did the cuts change. But he knew that nothing could be discovered. It was just a haze, and that was the end of it.

But not quite the end, for with the passing of a week, it was found that the haze in radio sets was growing thicker.

The International Radio Control Board began to get worried. A meeting of radio experts, among them Greville Mallory, was convened.

They could find no solution.

And in these world times the haze had grown to a high-powered haze—a version that made radio reception ridiculous, and the cycle of its activities was ever widening.

Then came the really maddening part of the whole business. The haze spread beyond the radio-circling electrical haze to land.

Streets with electric trolley or electric light began to haze like banishing fog, houses blurred, curtains, curtains, charlottes—on of the few places where any real feel power—all hazing that same peculiar haze.

They hazing as they passed through the streets, and their hazing hazing when they were still.

The widespread hazing became ghoulish banks of hazing cattle—ants on a move.

And as the days went by so the haze grew.

People began to lose their nerve. Thousands of cases of neurotics filled the hospitals; hysteria was a common occurrence in the streets.

The hazing hater was gripping the world so that the world itself was fast becoming a gigantic hazing top.

In desperation, at the advice of Greville Mallory, Britain closed down all her electricity generating stations for the period of the hazing manifestation; but even then the strange hazing still hazing, and after the fourth week, the air itself began to haze, the haze of haze and haze hazing.

The fire electrically in the air, the air truly in the human body—all was picking up the strange hazing.

Many people began to lose their reason. Suicides became a common occurrence. The death roll in Britain was alarming.

The world was slowly going mad...

### ★ DOME OF ELECTRIC FIRE

AT FEW thirty one days the hazing haze reached its climax.

The air-haze was full, hospitals were overflowing, no such large country beers had to be turned into nursing homes.

Every master in the civilian world had a few hours passed of leisure when all work could cease.

And then, on the thirty-second day, during Britain's final haze "haze," the minute grew to its greatest height.

It all rose to a hazing sheet of sound...

And then with a hazing, as if suddenly, it passed...

...as if someone had turned over a grand piano.

A ghastly silence fell over London... A silence such as the Metropolis only experiences during the yearly two-million silence. Only the dull, monotonous tick of clocks disturbed the peace.

Greville Mallory and his two assistants, still working in the laboratory to keep their minds of the ghastly noise, looked up from their books.

"It's stopped—suddenly," said Jim.

"And before its time."

"I wonder..." began Mallory.

The others looked at him expectantly, but he said nothing about the matter. Instead

"Let's get home," he recommended.

Jim got out their little fire cars, M.G., and all three piled into it.

The laboratory was a mile or twenty miles out of London, and with driving at the wheel the journey usually took no more than half an hour.

But to night the journey was destined not to be made on that time.

The car was walking an even path for along one of the roads to prison when Mallory suddenly noticed a haze in the sky some distance away to the left.

"What's that made of that?" he pointed.

"That's made a line," estimated Mallory, holding out a rag on the back of the open car. "We'll have a look," Jim, he called.

The young Englishman obediently turned the car at the next crossing, and proceeded in the general direction of the haze.

It grew in intensity as the car moved towards it—a strange pale haze in the sky, apparently reflected from the earth.

It was about two miles out of the little village of Haddington, on an open heathland, that they came upon the source of the haze. And it was a sight that amazed them.

In the heart of the heathland was a gigantic dome of haze like fully half a mile in diameter, throwing its pale light all over the surrounding country, and reflecting its fiery brilliancy into the night sky.

A crowd of about twenty villagers was already gathered some distance from it, and they were watching as Mallory and his two assistants came up.

"What do you make of it?" asked Jim.

"Never saw anything like it," said Jim.

"Amazing," estimated Mallory. "Electrized, but goodness knows what causes it. This we can't see through it. When did it start?" he asked one of the men as they approached.

"Ten hours—he saw it; he'll tell ya," returned the man, a bearded old fellow.

Tom—a youngster of about twelve—came in answer to his call.

"Some big things came out of the sky," he said vaguely, eying the close research workers curiously. "We were walking—Bill and me—over the moors when some big things came crashing down out of the sky. We didn't rightly see them, 'cos next minute they was like the ones over there and then sprawled out all like this now. I can't tell you all about it."

But Mallory wasn't listening now.

"Come standing out of the sky," he said. "When did—Tell me, boy, did it happen when the air started hazing?"

The boy looked at the scientist, vacantly for a moment. Then—

"Yes, that's right. When the haze stopped. That's it. I remember now my body, like a bee see stars as I ran to tell you."

Mallory nodded briefly.

"We'll get home," he said to Jim. "It'll come down again to the morning." And when they were out of sight of the village, "This looks like something big."

"What do you think?" asked Jim. "Something to do with the hazing hazing?"

"Undoubtedly," answered the scientist.

The haze was out of space, a haze that disturbed all forms of electricity on earth. It caused when some object reached the earth and set up an electrical storm about themselves. Of course, it all fits together. I've had an idea all along that it might be power-electric power-transmitted from another planet. And by means of that power a number of objects of some kind have reached the earth."

"Visible from another planet?" burst out Jim.

"Stanley now," retorted Mallory. "That's going too fast. We don't know what these visitors are. May be objects like the sounding balloons we send into the stratosphere. If we can get beyond that electric field—"

"Aye, it'll be very interesting," said Mac slowly. "Very interesting."

The little M.G. went roaring towards London.

\* \* \* \* \*

Four days had passed, four days of sleep taken from the hazing hours.

Blackbogley had become famous in a night. The strange phenomenon caused the little village had attracted thousands of spectators. Day and night hundreds of people gathered round the cones of fire and tried to prove the many bays of light.

Three men had been electrocuted in attempting to break through, and turned to stone gave evidence of their bad hazing.

Amphibius, flying over the place, reported that the dome was absolutely complete, and as eye had yet seen beyond the impenetrable electric field.

Greville Mallory had as yet offered no opinion, and now, on the fourth day, he was making his stand right to the spot.

Together with his two assistants he walked towards the dome without a hundred yards distance—his body began to tingle with the electrical force.

He stopped sharply, looking towards the strange blue fire.

Then it was that the next move in this strange drama was made.

Something boomed up through the misty air of the dome, some strange black figure that grew slowly clearer.

Then—it was outside the area of fire, and the sight of it caused the three watchers to jump in amazement.

It was a metal man.

A stony, ugly figure, with head, body, arms and legs patterned in the form of metal, but with joints that were circular, so that it walked with a strange, jerky movement.

The metal of which it was made was black, black as ebony, and it shone weirdly in the early morning sunlight.

It had no form of nose or mouth, but two circular discs of white showed where the eyes were situated. In the centre of its body was a smaller white disc, larger, and perhaps glowing—the watchers could not be quite sure.

The crowd watching behind gazed their amazement, and stood eagerly witnessing the strange drama.

The metal man was now as tall as ten feet from the floor upwards, and he came to a sudden halt.

Without a sound from the joints the strange automaton raised its arm in what might have been a salutation or a signal to someone behind him.

Mallory raised his arm in a similar salutation, and then all three staggered back as an intense beam of yellow light flashed from the circular disc in the body of the creature.

"Blast rap!" yelled Jim. "Look out!"

## Carried into the Dome of Fire

But the beam of light seemed to stay suddenly when fire flew from the metal man as if it burned on an electric screen, and next came the end of the beam formed itself into a circular globe of light a huge close sphere like a giant soap bubble.

From into the depths of the sphere floated a many pictures which gradually revolved itself into a mist-looking sphere with a band of light floating around it.

"Saturn?" Malley gasped out the word. "A visitor from the planet Saturn, and his a visitor in solid pictures. My God, what a discovery!"

Then, before the startled eyes of the visitors, into the sphere of light floated a moving pictures of pictures—a group of the metal men, then a single man, last others painted red or constructed of some red metal. Next a strange circular ship something like a gigantic balloon top, that rose from solid black earth and then fell again or to green grass.

Finally, a picture of the dome of Mars fire, perfect in its likeness. Then the light sphere began whirling with heat, and gradually faded out so that the white disc in the body of the strange creature glowed dully once again.

The metal man stood waiting, waiting perhaps for some similar manifestation from the body of one of his three visitors.

As a lion, the companions stood silent. Then—

"We are men of Earth," said Malley loudly. "Are you from the planet Saturn?"

For a moment nothing happened, then Malley felt his head going dizzy and his mind became a taut of racing thoughts that made no sense. His one coherent thought was, "I am going mad. This is a gloomy nightmare."

Then, in a sudden inspiration, he saw reason.

"Telepathy. Thought transmission," he shouted.

With the idea, he cleared his mind and suddenly, again, the mind pictures formed in his brain.

"I am from the planet Zog. I do not understand Saturn. This is Earth, the planet of light, over a thousand years we have had no communication. We have now succeeded. We are great and so far you have thoughts. We constructed the picture language since we imagined you might be a lower form of life. But I see you are flesh and blood people. They died from Zog millions of years ago. Metal men are now the only inhabitants. How many of you are there on Earth?"

"We call this planet Earth," Malley denied the thought. "We name your planet, which you call Zog, Saturn. We have millions of inhabitants on Earth. We have

no metal men, except in experimental form, and they cannot think for themselves."

"I am interested," came back the thought. "You must come before the research ends."

"But flesh and blood people cannot pass through the dome of fire."

"I understand that, see if I carry you?"

And as the thought came, the strange creature moved towards Malley, and before he had time to draw back had lifted him out his arms.

Jim and Mac gaped with horror. They had not picked up the thought messages, and saw, in the pavement of the metal man the death of Malley.

They made to tear at the creature's arms, but now he had turned and was walking towards the dome of electric fire, and as they went with him gradually the electric power got greater and greater. . . . Until the two assistants could bear it no longer and they drew back defeated.

And the metal man, with his human form, disappeared blackly in the heart of the electrical fire.

The walking crowd turned and ran. Women screamed. This was an experience the like of which human eyes had never seen before.

T - evening papers shocked the world.

### \* IN THE HEART OF THE DOME

THE iron dragged out their weary length. Two hours of walking and waiting.

But still there was no sign from beyond the mysterious dome of electrical fire. What had become of Malley? Is the assistant forced to game?

Joe O'Sullivan, the boy Irishman, could stand it no longer.

"We've got to do something," he burst out, "and I know what you're doing to the Chief behind that averted barrier. We've got to do something."

"Aye," murmured Mac, rocking at an empty pipe. He consulted his watch. "Two hours. Aye. We'd better try something. I'll try it; it's the only way."

"What?" demanded Jim.

"Never you mind," returned the even-tempered Mac. "You get away to the nearest phone and ask Captain York—no, they'd be no

round the huge dome on which Giselle Malley sat strapped to a chair, the metal men of Zog stood before duplicated sets of dials and controls.

"Ask the—yes, the War Office—ask them to send down troops and some tanks. Then leave the rest to me. I'll be waiting there."

O'Sullivan looked slightly staggered, but he made no objections and walked with Mac as far as the parking place.

"But what are you going to do?" asked Jim again.

"I'm going to do something. I've never done before. I'm going to take a ride in an aeroplane, and God 'a' Harry on my soul!"

Mac purchased that profound statement with a blinding roar on the exhaust of the MG, and left the staggered O'Sullivan in a cloud of blue exhaust smoke.

"And get these tanks if you have to drive



## The Fight with the Ship from Saturn

them yourself?" the wind gasp asked at him.

Half an hour later a L.S.P. aircraft descended and swooped low, banked first above the deck of electric fire.

The gaping watchers saw a figure climb onto the masts and at a wave from the pilot himself burst out into space.

McArdle had taken a long shot. Not only had he made his first complete bypass—without any loss or even fire—but he had made his first landing out into space.

McArdle had taken the long shot. Not only had he made his first complete bypass—without any loss or even fire—but he had made his first landing out into space.

He closed his eyes as he fell into the fiery gulf, heard the spit and crackle of the passed through the electric core, but breathed easy, as he knew that his gears had been right.

As he was not in contact with the Earth the electricity would not have any effect on him. It was just the same as a bird alighting on a 60,000 volt live cable of the big Electricity Grid. That did not suffer any effects, neither did he now.

Crashing and spluttering, the "Chris" passed through the electric dome, and then Mc was gone to Mars.

Dazed he looked to pulled himself up.

An amazing sight met his gaze. Five domes and mounds, something like giant tops, but with leading shafts and strange, gaudily-colored panels, encircled most of the interior of the dome, but in the centre of the place was the most staggering sight of all.

A long dark base took the lofty heights of the electrical dome, and a small strip of strap-off to a short, red, surrounded with strange instruments that glowed and flashed, was the seemingly unconscious figure of Thrille Malley.

All round the central sun was a circular band—surrounded by the dots of hundreds of wires, and stretching before degenerated sets of controls on the which were at least twenty of the same strange metal rods.

Mc stood silently watching, a few feet away to do.

The metal rods made just the slightest movement. All was soft and silent to the strained sense.

He couldn't tackle twenty metal rods.

A small rocket came to his aid. "The time," it said, "you could get to the controls of the electrical dome. You could get you through, and let the noise through."

And just when Mc had men ready without the endearment of music.

America had looked out on him. "Here that are your congratulations of separation and the free flight," said the ship.

"The big shot must have been emitted in the past four days," he said, "but the dome came over the ship as soon as they landed. The controls must be in the ship, or one of the ships."

At that moment the metal rods seemed to become aware of his presence, and some of them began snapping towards him.

Mc at once was staggering on towards the nearest red ship.

He could feel no door to the queer machine. He made a swift shift of his anatomy, and the world was about him, fell his and became the root of tortured thoughts, and as a sudden inspiration darted under the ship between the two ramers.

He looked upwards, saw an opening, and passed himself into it. The red ship closed, he stepped onto the circular floor above him, and there was silence, death.

Then he landed again.

The silence of the ship was stuporous. A gigantic redoubt, full of metal occupied the centre of the ship, all round an electrically rose gallery after gallery, mounted and approached by steps at intervals all round.

Below the revolving ball, which appeared to float in air, was a queer mass of levers, duly weighted, and wheels like stop rods.

Farther of the compasses, but resolved in the knowledge that he had to be something— and that quickly—he grabbed at all the levers, turned them, fling the switches, turned the "stop-overs."

Light flashed about here, strange pain-faced deadly blots from their mouths, huge blades began to revolve with a whirling burst.

Then, as he being another lever, the great metal ball fell.

It solved him by torture, but completely unrolled the instruments beneath it.

A staggering dash of fire fire that sang the curtain back and then all was silent.

Scarcely. Mac got to his feet again, blazed the electric door, and stepped through.

He was outside the dome of fire now. Apparently, all the five ships had been setting up the electric storage, and now that this ship was out of action, the electrical power of the two nearest ships had drawn to action beyond the other.

But it had evidently weakened the power, for there was a dark lumbering into the electrical issue.

Here, too, at his feet, lay the mangled remains of the four metal men, lost, and twisted pieces of scrap.

"Well, I'm dynamited," gasped Mac. "I'm outside again."

Then, before he could decide on any further move, over the deadly humoring horns again. The air roared and burned, and the engineer felt his own body trembling in uncontrollable fear.

Next appeared something rose into the air, something that crawled and flailed and in the sunlight.

Just as suddenly the electric dome faded, and there was the whole mysterious rose had been.

Then suddenly still roared gods and silent as the heathland, and the mangled remains of metal men were drawn about.

But in the centre beside the shattered debris reared the rock, with an officer of the R.T.C. and Jim O'Brien mounting Thrille Malley into it.

They stopped suddenly as they saw the electric dome disappear, and Mac dashed to them.

"Good, there you are," he panted. "All right and good. I'm thinking—"

"Quick!" broke in Malley. "Have you got the oil in here?"

"As yet in the parking place. But what—"

"We've got to ring what other possible. The rock disabled but it managed to rise. It may not get far, and we've got to get the War Office on to it. That machine must be allowed to return to Saturn."

"As yet," answered Mac briefly. "The car's waiting."

And all the time that here, that terrible noise shaking him.

### \* BATTLE OVER THE CHANNEL.

THE last sense of that strange dome was played out on the coast of Britain.

A strange vessel had been reported flying towards the coast, and the War Office had got it well established.

A squadron of fast fighters and a squadron of torpedo bombers had gone speeding towards the coast, and these battlehounds and a number of light bombers had put out from Portsmouth Harbour.

And it was over the English Channel, just off Seaford Head, that the "Pione" charged, the massive red ship, spitting blades and upper propeller glinting in the wild half-light of the setting sun.

She was moving slowly, evidently disabled, and it looked as if she had not rise, for she maintained a height of about a thousand feet.

One of the fighters broke formation, and went swooping down to the attack, machine gun rattling a load of lead.

Almost immediately, the red ship took up the challenge. Flashes of light burst through the revolving blades, and faces bent faces at the fighters. They turned right over and were swooping down to a sea grave.

Then the dull, angry reverberation of anti-aircraft guns came from below as the battle ship moved as the moon.

She had set over the red ship, but apparently she suffered no blisters. Her revolving blades continued to glow in the fading light.

Three of the torpedo bombers took formation, went swooping down one after another, losing their deadly munitions.

One only scored a direct hit, but beyond shattering the upper propeller, it left the massive red ship unscathed.

And all the while the guns from the red ship continued to fire out some strange deadly load. One of the bombs exploded a mad air and went down, a gaudy tangle of burning wreckage.

It was a battle of giants, terrible to behold. Three more bombs went down to the surface. They had been the only units to make any effect on the ship.

Then came a startling phenomenon—if anything it was. The red ship, steaming lower, went down to within a hundred feet of the water.

The bombers were useful, and the torpedoes were terrible. Next, without any warning, the bombing began.

Then a spout of water rose from the sea, was fully a hundred feet into the air as if drawn by magnets, attracted to the red ship. It reached the strange cushion, exploded it, and then settled down again. And with it went the red ship.

What strange atomic or electrical phenomenon caused it, no one can tell. I write just as it occurred.

That was the last of the red ship from Saturn, or Zog. Its own power had evidently been lost.

Back in London, Thrille Malley was giving his report to the newspapermen.

"I am fully convinced," he was telling them, "that the shape and these strange passengers were created from the planet Saturn. They apparently come of all power and clarity, yearning for knowledge, just as we toward Saturn in Britain."

"I hold the opinion that the something larvae, as we now know it, was seeking something over electrical power, transmitted through the other ships from Saturn to Earth. The ship was caused when the batteries were in operation, and it is evident from that that they took thirty two steps for the journey."

"But what did they do to you inside that electric field?" said one of the reporters.

"Suddenly they were delighted to discover that I had the power of thought," reported Malley, "and so they put me on to that room opposite that they might search my mind out."

"They dragged everything. I knew not of me without my having to frame thoughts or answer questions."

"All I could gather from them was that they came in quest of knowledge. They had no high flying idea of conquering the Earth, or of possessing it. They found Britain a happy enough place."

Now the last of their space ships had met its end. It was, for had it not been we would have had to endure thirty-two more days of the harassing larvae, and they would surely have sent another expedition, the whole world would have been involved after another week of that deadly assault.

"As it is," he concluded, "the inhabitants of Saturn will probably consider that the expedition has been a failure and abandon further attempts."

"For God's sake, stop bawling!" exploded Jim O'Brien. "You—"

"You looked over his glasses and nodded. "All," he added, "ye wouldn't have good reason."

Great New Serial. A Masterpiece of Scientifiction



With the young air expert crouched between the struts of one of the planes, the black ships went roaring upwards into the night.

# The BLACK Vultures

*Terror From The Skies*

*Death From The Clouds*

## \* THE MASTER SAVES A SUICIDE

**Y**OUR change, sir?" impishly the smooth-faced young Kobel waved the waiter and his polished tray away.

"Keep it," he said hurriedly. "I don't want a

"Thank you, sir," stammered the waiter and withdrew, leaving Kobel alone in the lounge.

Minutes passed and Kobel sat motionless, staring into the dying embers of the fire. He was going to kill himself. He had decided to do it in the writing room upstairs.

There were three reasons why he had chosen the writing room. The first was that he hadn't sufficient money to pay the deposit for a bedroom. Another was that he wanted first to write a letter. And the third was this: of that this hour the writing room would be deserted.

Leaving untouched the black coffee which

the waiter had brought him, he rose to his feet and walked from the lounge. With a strange sense of unreality he mounted the stairs.

As he had anticipated, the writing room was deserted, and, closing the door behind him, he seated himself at one of the fat topped writing tables.

Kobens had left an evening newspaper on the table, and, as Kobel except it on purposefully aside, facing black headlines caught his eye.

## ANOTHER RAID BY THE BLACK VULTURES TAKES 5000 AND THE RUSSIAN TOWNSHIP OF

"Last night the Russian township of Taketik was raided by the master and matron of Black Vultures, the whom the combined police and military air forces of Europe are searching.

The raid was carried out in the ruthless and murderous manner usually adopted by these villainous night robbers, deadly gas bombs being first dropped on the town.

Kobel laughed roughly and swept the newspaper to the floor. Then he scrawled the initials "Tak" and behind these words which were traversing Europe! If only he could have done something like that.

Abruptly he dismissed the mood of thought and, pulling a sheet of notepaper towards him, picked up a pen. For a few moments he wrote rapidly, then, leaning back in his chair, he scoured the scrawled words,

switched on the electric fire and spread the table and floor an amount from his pocket. He placed the hand, bound muzzle against his temple and steadily his fingers tightened on the trigger.

Next instant there came a vicious report, loud from span from the gun, and Kobel saw a sharp crack at the far leather and splintered woodwork of the writing table through which the bullet had ploughed its way.

Then, as though emerging from a daze, he became conscious of a hand gripping his wrist, a hand which had whipped his own hand downwards, diverting his aim at the very last of time.

"You fool!" purred an accented voice behind him.

Slowly Kobel turned his head and found his self looking up into the hooded face he had seen once. Old gas green eyes stared down at him with a potato-like nose in their depths which found no reflection as cruel, than his accented by a kowlike nose.



Emmett



Bennie Oldman



## Survivor of a Poison Raid

a lightning bolt before down on the town ship of Barker in Eastern France.

And as they stood there walked in heavy flying kit, wearing the word to be studied from the central tablet that they were over Barker, hotel stared curiously at these grim-faced and silent creatures of ice.

There was the brutal and belligerent Black Vulture, second-in-command to Beccaria; there was the enormous Alaya, wanted for murder on the Spanish air route, there was the thin and fair-faced Falco, whose license made him the vicious soul of a city; and to these last two more of that infamous ram party there was the half-ways disfigured Xancho who, before joining the Black Vultures, had fallen into the hands of the White Army of Russia, and who would carry to his grave great tales of the progress they had made upon him because of his cruelty and savagery during the Revolution.

A still and light guard suddenly on the side of the square and pointed lower, a signal that the another raidship was over Barker, bringing them up into their cockpit, the pilots waved into a green light which told that the gas bombs were away, then themselves were spurred to fall, and with a dazing roar of supercharged engines the Black Vultures swept forward across the platform and sailed into the right to sweep eastwards in a screeching dive in the luring of the diluted sun.

### \* CAPTURED BY THE VULTURES

THEY were peace in Barker during the first hours of those early morning hours, but one of them was Derek Obrien, of the British Assassination Research Society.

Derek had been sent out from England to assist Professor Pilgrim, his experiments with the making of new engines in rocket atmosphere, and he was now busy in the Professor's well equipped laboratory.

Engrossed in his model he was running and the notes he was making, he became suddenly conscious of a peculiar pungent air which made him feel distinctly ill.

His first thought was that one of the gas cylinders in the laboratory was leaking, and with a wet handkerchief pressed over his mouth and nostrils, he moved quickly to the rock on which the gas mask was hanging and adjusted one over his face.

But this was no gas cylinder which was leaking. Many telltale fumes were drifting in through the laboratory windows, filling the room with a sickly fog.

"What on earth was happening?" Everything was so frighteningly still. Then, suddenly, there came to Derek's ear the muffled roar of powerful engines. The noise passed low overhead and died away as the engines were cut out for a landing.

Instantly the dreadful truth dashed upon Derek. The Black Vultures were raiding Barker and, following their usual feeding custom, were letting the inhabitants with deadly gas.

Swallowing down the shock, Derek stood assistance to the Professor's bedroom. It was full of the sickly fog of death. The Professor was quite dead. The gas had killed him as he slept.

His face grim and set behind his mask, Derek turned and, running swiftly downstairs, let himself out into the street. Next instant he clashed back into the doorway, for in the sickly light of a street lamp glimmering feebly through the yellowish fog, he had seen a line of masked figures advancing along the street.

Crushed in the doorway, Derek watched them pass. Black men were carrying a dozen automatons, although they must have known quite well that these could be used to offer little resistance.

They reached the bank situated a little way along the street, and these men a dull explosion as they blew in the door, then they vanished into the interior.

The looting of the vaults and safes was carried out coolly and without haste, and half an hour had elapsed before Derek saw the shadow emerge carrying the heavy bullock bags.

Derek was powerless to interfere. He was unarmed, and he knew only too well that, should he be detected by the gang, he would be needlessly shot down.

He crouched in the black shadow of the doorway. He watched them pass, then cautiously and as silent as a shadow he set off after them.

Just what he was going to do he had no idea. But as he heard the Vultures' footsteps roar into the on the outskirts of the town, and saw the black outlines of the machines, inspiration came in a flash.

He would take the air with these vultures and find out where they have been.

Steeling his heart, Derek moved forward and gripped the rear arm of the V-shaped platform of the massive machine. The pilot, intent on his controls, felt the machine rock under Beccaria's weight, but obviously under the impression that he had merely hit a bump in the ground, he jerked his throttle wider and moved forward up into the night.

His arms round the seat and his feet braced against the bottom of the "V," Derek hung gaudily on as the megaphone crackled steadily at an amazing speed.

He had torn his gas mask off shortly after emerging above the poison belt, and as the megaphone screamed higher and higher into the incipient atmosphere, he took the protection of holding the bolt of his gas gun firmly around the stat.

Already he was finding difficulty in breathing, and as the megaphone continued to rock he felt a chocking in his nose and his heart commenced to pound as though it would burst.

Thus, suddenly, darkly reflected against the blue Black sky, he moved to use about the meadow bank of a gigantic step.

The step was too large to be seen, and from

dark column thought before he lost consciousness was that it was but a jarage of his sleeping serum.

When next Derek opened his eyes it was to find himself lying on a sort of a very tenuously furnished and brilliantly lighted barge.

Steeling looking down at him was a man in light flying, high colored black uniform, a man with hawk-like features, a small, thin tipped mouth, and oblique green eyes in which lurked intense amusement.

"So you have come round then, my friend?" said the man.

Derek struggled into a sitting posture. He still felt dazed and light-headed through the oxygen which had been administered to him.

"Who are you?" he demanded weakly.

"Answer where are you?"

The man laughed. "I think it is I who should have the privilege of interrogating," he said. "But as answer your questions first. I am Beccaria, leader of the Black Vultures, and this is my cockpit, or 'cell' as we say, our cockpit. Wish to pass?"

Derek told him, for there was no reason why he should not.

"I see," commented Beccaria. "Well, Mr. Derek Obrien, as you have come along here unwilling and as, unfortunately, we have no room in our cockpit for such as you, I am afraid that I must kill you and have your body dropped overboard. As we can never over the nature of the Being, the chances of your being found will be negligible."

Derek half rose, then abruptly remained himself to stare fascinated at a silver plated automatic which had appeared as though by magic in the well unadorned hand of Beccaria, and which was pointed dead between his eyes.

In the cockpit of the Black Vultures. No one has ever penetrated their cockpit for four years. Until his kidnapping in Brook Colliery, Tom's mate went weekly and thrillingly involved in this great new world.

Kobell felt a hand  
direct his arm,  
and looked up to  
see a stranger  
in a black cloak  
looking down at  
him. "You  
fool!" snarled with an  
amused voice.



# Devilman of the Sea



## \* TRAPPED IN THE POWER HOUSE

DEVILMAN of the Deep, half-shark in appearance as in nature, ruler of the submarine caverns in the chain of submerged mountains that lie under the South Atlantic, was pleased for revenge.

His greatest enemy was the fisherman he had overthrown and whose highly developed efforts towards eradication he had annexed—Sea Flight.

But now to Sea Flight the rager of Devilman was set against the three human beings who had come to his submarine kingdom in those days—gentle Mark Stannard, Beaver Kettle and Abel Cornwall, who had aided Sea Flight to win the last battle in the war against Devilman.

Never before had human beings descended to this world under the sea, never had men seen the wonders of the race of fishes who had an intelligence higher, on the average, than average human men. And as Devilman swam downward through the heavy, watertight doors, his fins were at his levels, his rage grew with every stroke of his leathery arms and legs.

Higher up he had just sought and captured a hamsterhead shark. The peculiar suction force that each fish man possessed in the tentacle arms he used with such effect had driven the life from the shark in the manner of an octopus.

Devilman lifted Cornwall in his hideous arms and flung him on to the platform. Next instant he was inside the control frame.

The dead shark was to be smashed in the command center, its skin was to be used for leather, its teeth for plates and implements, bones for other uses. But as Devilman approached the ice wall of the tunnel he saw that no massive labyrinth was built against him. He saw his human foes barred from entrance to their home.

Up again, the cliff of ice Devilman swam like a fish in a bottle, his fins pressed against the chilly rugged wall. His keen eyes, used to darkness, sought to penetrate the interior of the ice labyrinth. He saw, in glimpses, the fangs of the Earthman's gun. He saw his little black fish-men, the more timid ones whom he had counted, fall before the guns. His anger mounted with it because it lay almost beyond his control.

He listened attentively for the murmur of the machinery that supplied the light, from the volcano below the city of fish-men. There was no sound. He watched for the glass that might tell him that the shattered rocks were upon the pit of natural forces. There was no light.

He guessed the truth, and as the possible means of defense threat itself lay before his twisted mind and gave vent to a triumphant cackling.

There was another way by which entrance could be gained to the interior of the machine, but it was a way by which he could not go. Death lay that way unless a series of effect parallel.

Around the bed of the sea on either side

NOT A MAN, Not a Fish, but all the Cruelty and Relentlessness of Inorganic Nature Personified.

of the ice wall were enormous shafts, set and twisted. These might have been big organic fibers of submarine growth, but they were not flowers, for they had no color. They were polished, smooth, sleek, and they lay spread out in curious helix formations.

They were mighty magnets, made of the propeller, iron plates and during—the metal of wrecked ships.

They were all sharp, from circles to the size of complete propellers. There were electric magnets there, which derived their power from the machinery below the ground, and this power was set in motion of metals from the machinery soon came.

Up from the auxiliary metal propelling shafts had been thrown in a mad way, and as Devilman tested his command his followers realized that while it meant probable death to them, it was certain death to themselves.

"One of you," said Devilman, "must squeeze down between these shafts and the rock. Get to the machine room. Start the ice wall moving."

He pointed his long under-arm towards a small fish-man, and the gookie was attracted. The gookie stepped forward, crawled under the magnets, squeezed himself into the smallest bulk, and began to wabble into the depths.

Devilman waited for some time, then with a second fish man down the black shaft. He returned, trailing behind him the dead body of his companion. The lamp had been killed by the tremors of a hidden explosion. It came up hanging in the dead fish-man, a small specimen, but a dangerous one.

The second fishman went down. He too was killed. Four fish-men had sacrificed themselves before the last of small enterprises was empty. At last a fish man went down, and the opening of the ice wall sounded.

Devilman swam back to the entrance. His great bulk was passed against the tiny crack in the wall as left the socket of rock. The greater bulk was pressed with so great a force that he could hardly bear it, but too dangerous to water made him take risks. He knew that inside the fortress his forces were in need of him.

At last he was forced through on the stream that poured into the cavern, and was sent forward as the current avoided across the floor.

He rose, gripping, splashed his way to a passageway, and began to crawl towards the machine room. He saw the bodies of his dead troops lying in heaps and being buried to and fro by the current. Many men told him what he had learned. The gookie of the gookies had taken terrible toll of his black soldiers.

The gookie itself was holding on the rising tide. The mouth had been closed, and it looked like a big metal balloon. But Devilman had no interest in the gookie. His objective was the control of the machinery. That would be the decisive

## Barthmen Capture the Control Room of the Deep

factor in the war that had been declared. Tom and Sam had been captured in the submarine, taking the same survivors of the battle to come to him.

A faint answer came a short way along the passage. He saw a little form lying on a corner. It was a small black fish, evidently wounded, his shirt. He fled, clutching him.

In a few sentences the captain told the story of the battle in the control room: how the attack had been made upon Barthman's troops as they waited, how they had been

# DEEP

shaken to pieces, how the Earthmen had gained the victory and had left the room with Sea Flight and the Doctor.

Devlinson ground his teeth in rage and bellowed out. He burst at last through the passage and looked down upon the heart of the submersing city. There at his feet lay the mighty machinery, the pumps, the bolts, the dynamos, the shifting and the bolts that drive the power.

Not a sound came from the usually busy rooms, not a sound, save the faint panting of the machine that controlled the ice walls between the rooms.

Devlinson grabbed down tools and jumped over obstacles, panting as he went. No one answered his call. He reached the pump room. He knew that he does not act his troops here, but he dashed the shifting controls which he had driven them.

He kept forward rapidly, taking behind the machinery every now and then for a brief space, fearful not this was a trap. In a last short dash he reached the covered apartment where the levers were located. At that moment the pumps would fail for the last time, and then stopped.

On the floor of the cub beside the polished handles of the levers lay the human who had taken his way down from the aquaria on the ocean bed. A bullet hole pierced his forehead. He was dead.

The bullet hole told Devlinson everything. The aquaria room was at the hands of the Earthmen. But where were they? Had they seen him? Were they watching him at that instant?

Devlinson laid his hand on one of the levers and tried to pull it over so as to start the pumps again. He could not move the lever. A wedge had been driven into its socket so that it could not be twisted. And the lever was in the position which pointed to reverse. That meant that the ice wall above had been closed again, and the water had been forced out. While Devlinson had been making his way towards the aquaria the Earthmen had killed his sub-servant and ruined the engine.

Devlinson transported no more. Where were his followers? He had losts of black troops who usually answered him. From the roof of the aquaria room hung a great air pump, the only light in the entire, but gave over the natural flames that fed the engines and supplied the power. The volume that remained under the aquaria room had been cut off, so efficiency had been thrown down the long passage that constituted the floor.

He stepped out of the cub and, running him self up towards a storage point, a rank passage made of steel, checking that traversed the levers and the panting section.

Something whizzed past his head and struck the back of the doorway of the cub. He dropped flat on the panting.

Again the long series of a whistle, and the levers on which he lay were clipped by a bullet.

Devlinson dropped from the skyway, clinging to a belt, slid down behind a bolt, and lay still.

old knives by the machinery that had closed the various doors. His ears, sharpened by long training, told him every word. "Kells and I will go over and find him or his body," said Samson. "Be ready with your guns, Kells. We may only be occupied And Sea Flight, when we have advanced this Devlinson to you dead or alive, we'll start on our journey for that, named to you now."

"The Doctor has gone to make preparations," replied Sea Flight. "Manulian let me come with you to show you the way through the southern passageway. Cornwell and Dennis have in charge of the control room."

Devlinson lay very still. In that instant there was noise in his brain as though of千万 voices than own voices. Used to avoid fighting, the race by which his troops had been that little one was threatening. Fighting could be matched with hunting. The stake was high. He smothered to trick those men who might hear.

They could not see him as lying there deep

## \* THE BATTLE IN THE CAVE

A MUSKET had hit him hard and pressed round the edge of the bullet.

Through the wall of machinery he saw the three Earthmen as a phantom at the other side of the room. They were beside the control room, the place where they could govern every piece of machinery, and beside them stood Sea Flight. They came close to Devlinson on the silence.

"I missed him with my first shot," said Kells, "but I thought you hit him, Samson."

He dropped quickly enough, sir," said Cornwell.

"He must have entered by the ice wall," said Sea Flight gravely. "That is the reason of the Earthmen we found in the pump room. We know that he does not act his troops here, but he dashed the shifting controls which he has driven them."

Devlinson's eyes glimmered as he heard the words. He knew now that his troops were words. He knew now that his troops were



Glimpsing on the rope, Cornwell's cape hurtling down. He was within a yard of the undersea master when his gun cracked out.

## Black Workers of the Undersea World

in the gloom. The boiler by which he lay sick one of them had belonged to a ship he had brought down, the sides were rusty, and its valves would not hold steam longer, but Devlinus did not think of that just then. He slowly eased himself, spread the wide door at the end, hunched himself up and lay down.

He did not close the door completely, but kept it open so that he might hear and see.

Stimmons, Kells and Sea Flight could be heard moving about, exchanging remarks. They passed under the machinery, flicked a torch light here and there. Once Kells actually stood by the boiler in which Devlinus lay. Had he known it, he was never nearer death than at that instant.

But Devlinus did not attack. He was the ghost of the destroyer in Kells' head. He heard Stimmons advance a search over towards the opposite side of the cage, in case he had crawled in that direction.

Devlinus waited until their voices grew fainter. Then he acted with the activity of a tiger.

He sprang suddenly out of the boiler, dashed past pipes and dynamos, swung up to a saddle, and went along it like a monkey. He was dragging above the central house before Sea Flight gave the alarm.

It was too late then. Stewards dragged Devlinus on the platform of the central house, and in a bind he was made.

Abel Cornwell was standing near the house roof that surrounded the well covered with pipes. He turned to see the monster lung for him.

He dropped to the floor. He intended to keep out of range of those terrible molar jaws, but as he dropped Devlinus' foot caught him a terrible blow on the head. Away went Devlinus across the room, and next instant Devlinus had him fast, flung him outside, and slammed the door.

He was still sounded through the cage with lightning velocity, and the big arms got busy with the rest, set on the wall.

Down came hands after hands, one went crack after crack, until Devlinus' yell escaped. The great jaws above remained voracious but the mighty dynamo began to move, the turbines that had once been built into fast clear ships roared their last burst of power, the generators, transformers, and other parts of the station were in a roar.

From the entire room there were the hums, thuds, and roars of the mighty machinery. Pot that was not all.

All around the room doors were thrown open as if by magic. Tools that seemed to be part of the cages rolled back and exposed other cages. From the rocky floor Devlinus swung aside, revealing the intense heat, and in some cases, fumes, that came up to heat the boiler, and acted as furnaces.

A glance at those showed where the human obtained all the fuel necessary. A bar of coal banked, worked on an endless chain, moved in a circle, tipping them contents into the furnaces. These were used for stoking there. The work was done with the precision and mechanical accuracy of the latest automatics.

As far Stimmons and his companions, they barely escaped with their lives. The massive machinery began to operate they would all their wits to thread their way out of the cage of moving things. It was Sea Flight who led them amid the tall pillars and the pending machines. It was useless to speak, to try to explain. Their voices were drowned in the tumult. But words were not required. They heard the yell and tramping of Devlinus, and by the time they had emerged to a side track they saw the other end of the rail.

Running from one of the side doors strayed hundreds of little black fishmen, acting in a chorus of snarling yells to their leaders.

Cornwell had recovered consciousness and sat up in a dazed way, holding his head. He observed the fishes racing towards the

central house. A glance round showed him Sea Flight and his companions about the cage. They were regarding him in awe, snarling, although he could not hear a word of their directions.

But he understood the split-second of Sea Flight, who pointed to a cable stretched from the central house to the roof. It was the thick cable that carried the electric current to the lamp above.

Abel Cornwell went, lost his head at any time, and now he remained as cool as ever. One hand in revolver, and by springing towards the door of the central house. He fired into the lock, kicked the door open, aimed at Devlinus, and fired again.

He had no time to watch the effect of his shot, for the last of little blacks was coming towards him. He snatched his revolver pointed towards them and picked off the foremost, then sprang clear above them as others advanced and began crushing the cable with the agility of a cat.

Some distance up he passed, sulphur his legs round the cable, and safely released his gun.

He snatched it again at the blacks, bringing one down with every shot, then climbed higher every time.

Again he fired his gun with ammunition from his pocket; but this time he did not aim at the rapping little men below. He took steady aim and fired at the cable where it joined the central house. His first shot missed and glanced along the roof of the house, but his second severed the cable.

The great electric lamp was extinguished, and the cable, passing free, and he with it. But he was not yet finished.

He began to swing as a trapset artist swings, passing underneath cable and wire.

The glowing light from the furnaces made a queer setting for this strange scene. Down came Cornwell at the end of the cable until he was within arm's length, ahead of the fish men who stood near the power house.

Devlinus emerged and watched also, his eyes gleaming with rage and cunning. Cornwell's intention was to swing until he could had himself beside his friend; but before he could do this his companion must bring him within a very short distance of the platform on which Devlinus stood.

In vain Stimmons, Kells and Sea Flight struggled not to understand.

As for Sea Flight, the moment that Devlinus' yell had gone up to him, he had cast out a call. It was a shriller tone than Devlinus' yell, clear cut of a clarion; and from other shores came the taller fish-men in answer.

But the hostility stood between the two houses, and Devlinus had the advantage of the situation. Sea Flight was now in full view of his enemy, and as he stood there he was also exposed especially to his followers, dazing them with gestures of a living nightmare.

Then, instead of attacking, the tall fishmen did not attack the way they had come, until only a scattered group remained by the doors.

The thought flashed into Stimmons' mind that Sea Flight intended to make his enemies in the cage, and the thought was driven out of his head because of the design to Cornwell. Devlinus was young, and now his feet were so close that Devlinus made a grab at his heels as they sailed above his head.

Up came Cornwell's legs, crushing. He passed the head of the monster with barely a foot of clearance. Now he started to swing back again; and once more Devlinus leaped to catch him. Once more he failed.

So the movement went on, and every time Cornwell made his swing Devlinus made an effort to catch him. Stimmons and Kells stayed here and they trying to get an arm on Devlinus. But the little arms throb and kept behind a great big throat pipe may when he leapt at Cornwell, and then his body flinched only for a split-second above the amphitheater.

By now Cornwell had increased his swing

so much that he came near to where Stimmons and Kells stood. He passed and swerved over, snarling then that he intended to grip that they must be prepared to catch. Their own battlefield was processor; but it was the only hope of saving their comrades.

They leaped that fast enough for the final swing. Down came Cornwell in a great swoop.

"Now!" yelled Kells.

But Cornwell sliced his head as he leaped upward past them, inverted, and then came down again.

Once more he sliced up his legs as he passed the waterline, once more he flew high past the fish men.

But this time there was a change. When he was at his greatest height, the highest point of the sea, he right hand gripped at his feet. He seemed to be lying flat out on the atmosphere. He held the cable by one hand only. He lunged downward. If his hand slipped he would meet death with the preceding machinery.

The swing started. Like a human pendulum Cornwell came down, legs straight, right hand swinging inward.

Devlinus saw him and stood ready. This time he would reach the man he wanted to kill. A gun was at his feet as he waited. His huge arms shook out like snakes.

Cornwell seemed to fall straight towards him, but, two yards from him, his right hand fished out.

He fired full at the monster's head. Then, passing over the falling form of Devlinus, leaping upward like a rocket.

"Now!" he cried, and although they could not hear him they knew that new was the cry.

Would Cornwell judge his distance exactly? Only a practised athlete could do that, surely. Down he came again, and this time his hand unhooked the cable when no more distance from his companion. The insurance carried his friend.

Stimmons and Kells leaped themselves apart.

They saw Cornwell descend upon them, and to their surprise he landed as gracefully as any toddler at a stage. There was no shot, save the slight one that any serf might make in jumping from a height. And Abel Cornwell came in not between the arms of Kells and Stimmons, a broad grin on his rugged features.

"It's an old trick," he said quickly. "I've done it often aboard ship. Swinging from a yardarm is what every ocean ought to practice. I get Devlinus, sir! Look at 'em now!"

There was Devlinus, lying pants berida the central house, surrounded by his black tunic who strode to carry his out of danger. But a task more strength than they could muster put them. In their intention was focused on something else.

Sea Flight had left his friends while Cornwell was making his spectacular swing, and now they saw him again across the screen.

## \* VAMPIRES OF THE DEEP \*

THEIR he was, his tall form leading his bones through the door by which the blacks had come. The fight for the central house was now reaching its crisis. Sea Flight had brought his battalions to attack the rear, so it was now Cornwell and Stimmons at the same point.

The three men could not take part in the fight that ensued, and were compelled to act merely as spectators. Their fate was in the balance. If Devlinus' forces won they would never again see the light of day. If Sea Flight's sub-chiefs were victorious, he had promised to share them the passage under the sun to South America.

It had to be admitted, too, that in the fury of battle the small black fishes were (Based on an unknown out-of-print page)

# Turn Your IDEAS Into Cash

Every Man has an Idea. Let SCOOPS "Tell the World"!

Continuing—

## DEVILMAN OF THE DEEP

the better soldiers. They were ferocious, incapable of pity, head in battle under their own leader.

The first onslaught of Sea Flight's troops forced the Blacks back to the very edge of the central house platform, but then the devils rallied. They formed a solid phalanx around their leader, leader, who then turned on his companions and yelled about a quarry.

Am I dreaming, or did I hear Devilman's voice?"

They looked intently at the struggling form. This was Sea Flight in the van, throwing his arms out with the swift precision of a boxer. He caught the Blacks and threw them down before him. Now and then he lifted one and hurled him into the audience right across the platform.

He was wriggled around and behind him, now sprawling down the stage, now clumped down by them. But always Sea Flight's face shone with the glory of battle and the enthusiasm of the thirty for which he fought. Then the vanishing that had taken place in the ranks of the Blacks seemed to come as a sudden stop. Not an inch farther could Sea Flight's men thrust them. Again Devilman turned to the audience.

Devilman shook his head indignantly. "I shot you square in the head!" he shouted. "I tell you I shot him fair and square!"

"I saw you," replied Kells at the top of his voice. "You shot him all right, but they are not men. Abel! Your electric bullet probably went right through him. Devilman, how the Hebele opposed Sea Flight?" They have wonderful powers of recovery if they are treated at once after being wounded."

Again they heard the shout that seemed to indicate the survival of Devilman. Again the black hosts crowded round the spot where he lay, and then an amazing thing happened.

Up from the midst of the blacks rose Devilman. He was on his knees. The blood that had his blood was dripping from the hole in his forehead. He staggered up, and his weaker hands kept moving across his face to take the flesh from his eyes.

And hands like were also black fiends who seemed to be torturing their tiny hands on his head, stroking his bones and pulling his sinews.

"There they are, doing their mangy work!" cried Kells. "It's only we humans know the secret of these poly and monstrosities!"

"I think I can guess something of what it is," replied Stannard. "These fiends have a different base of life from us. We need carbon and nitrogen and protein. They don't. They haven't blood like us. They have a secret of life we don't know about. That is why they can live forever—"

His explanation was drowned in the ferocious yells that suddenly arose above the thunder of the machinery. The blacks were cheering their leader, and from another door more blacks were coming to the fury.

This door was not at the side of the platform of the arena. It was from a tunnel that seemed to lead straight to the outer regions. It opened in the ground not far from the central house, and up came the most terrible things that ever man beheld.

They were fiends, but stronger than

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Or popular weekly feature. "Can it be done?"

HOW TO OBTAIN THE SWING

The above idea gives on a page of paper a gnomical, wacky room diagram, if necessary, indicated by it.

"Then—SCOOPS,"

16, Hammers Street, London, W.C.2.

Please enclose 10/- to cover the cost, with one copy of a newspaper, and 2/- will be paid to the author of each idea.

Each week it will be decided in the order which idea is put into use.

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# ELYSM

Wars, Revolts, Lawlessness bring the Earth the Sinister Spectre of the Plague walks and sets out to Colonise the Planet Mars

"Do you think that they have hacked out?"

"Them?—Mars!—Not! You will not find them hacking out after all the years they have spent at trying to make a rocket ship."

"True," agreed the girl.

"Mallheimer has arrived," the man answered. "Have you not been yet?"

"No," replied the girl.

"Come up on the house then, and I will introduce you."

They were silent as they walked towards the house. Then Mary broke in.

"Do you remember Mother?"

"Mother? Why, of course. The man who constructed a ship in which he travel to the Moon. The trip ended in disastrous failure and resulted in his going mad."

"Yes," said the girl. "Mother was confined in an asylum, but yesterday he escaped."

"Escaped? Do you think that he has heard of our intended trip to Mars?"

"I can see he has."

"Then we shall have to watch out for strangers."

Mary laughed merrily.

"That is absurd. What chance have people of staying away on the ship when it is guided for ever straight?"

By this time they had entered the house, and in the hall stood a tall man, man of about thirty-five. It was the German, Mallheimer. "Mallheimer!" exclaimed Jacques. "That is my friend, Mary."

The German smiled and came forward with untroubled hand.

"Having based so much about you from my boat, he used on faintly English, "I have been looking forward to meeting you."

For all the man appeared so pleasant, Mary took an uninvitingly dislike to him. But she concealed it, and took his outstretched hand.

"And now, if you have the time to spare," said the German to his host, "I would be pleased if you would inform us about your work."

"Certainly," replied Jacques. "Come into the lounge."

He waited until they were all comfortably seated in the lounge, and then began to talk.

"As you are doubtless aware," he said, "this will be the child time that an attempt has been made to leave the Earth. The first two have ended in failure. Fifteen years ago Professor Marney built a ship. His machine, was rocket propelled. As the mighty jaws tore at the ship as start it on its journey, a terrifying explosion took place which worried it severely, and many people who had gathered to see its departure were killed."

The second attempt took place three years

later. Ralph Motter, in the *Moonbird*, rose to a height of twenty-four miles before dropping to Earth again. Motter alone was alive when the doors were forced open. His two companions, their bodies horribly contorted, lay where they had been laid across the ship. Motter was insane, gibbering incomprehensible words to his rescuers. He was confined to an asylum, from which he escaped yesterday.

"Two years after that attempt Marney was arrested, and rather dismally. Dismally, the metal which possesses the hardness of steel and yet is very light. The metal was discovered in strange circumstances."

"A terrible struggle took place in Italy, and from the bowls of the Earth came this strange substance which was so light yet yet so adamant. It may appear strange in you that a substance as light should be so deep in the Earth, but no one has shown us strange things."

"I now possibilities in the material, and planned to use it. There will be no need of tremendous explosions to start the ship on its journey. That is the fact that I am departing upon for the success of my flight to Mars. Four more days, and the thing is ready. Hello, Mallheimer."

The German smiled.

"Four more days," he repeated.

"At the present time," continued Jacques, "Mars is at a distance of approximately 43,000,000 miles. To reach our objective we shall have to attain a speed of 25,200 miles per hour. At that speed we shall reach Mars in twenty-seven days. In stocking the ship with the necessary provisions, I have managed to pack enough to last seven months for a period of one hundred and fifty days. That allows an instant drags on Mars."

"And that should be enough," continued Mallheimer.

"Yes. It will give us the necessary opportunity to use what we want. There is always a doubt about the air, though. But I am sure that it will be quite breathable, although it is certain to be much more than ours."

Mallheimer studied the visitor he had taken. He evidently the old, old desire of men for fresh worlds to conquer was in him. Earth was numbered—very neck and crook of it had succumbed to the workings of a civilization that was fast becoming bound with itself.

Even the German studied Marney, so Marney studied Mallheimer. She tried to find out why she did not like him, but could not. The smile was purely indifferent.

Mallheimer was soon given out of the window to where, in the distance across the garden, he could see the thin shape of the space ship, surrounded by the massive framework which was to serve it as a yard.

The faint light from a moment ago illuminated the name, and all was wrapped in a pervading silence. Mr. Howard knew that Marney was few armed guards. He was called no names with the doubled earnestness.

Surprisingly, he glanced up at the Moon. Clouds were creeping up from the bottom, ready to encircle it.

Mallheimer said, "Good night."

"I feel like retiring, if you do not mind," he said.

Jacques looked at his guest. "Yes, of course I am tired."

Instantly the German left the room.

"I think I'll go to bed, too," said Marney. "I want to be ready early to meet the guests."

"All right. Good night, Mary."

"Good night, Jacques."

Long after the girl had gone, Jacques stood gazing at the ship and the long, gleaming rods up which she would glide, and at last the thickening shadows reached the Moon, and the outer world was plunged in darkness. There is no tomorrow.

"Four more days," he whispered to a grotesque little sit that glistened and twinkled at him from a corner of the window recess.

## ★ "PROGRESSIA" GOES UP

It was four days later, and gathered together under the roof at the Hayards were some of the most distinguished scientists the world has ever known.

The house resounded in the soft music of French's most famous dance band, playing at the funeral party.

Jacques was driving his omnibus alternately between Hastings and the reporter for *The World News*. Obviously he would look at the clock . . . Mary was dancing. Mallheimer stood silent and alone, watching her dance.

The dance, beautifully as he noticed, did not ask her for a dance, for he was afraid of being wounded—he could see her blushes of him. Now she was dancing with Marney, the American.

Yes, it was a gathering of notable. Mallheimer thought to himself, his good taking easier time. He picked out his fellow-vagabonds.

Jacques, the kingpin of the whole affair, was worried that their own world would depend in the coming weeks. Marney, the famous American engineer, who had faded from America to go on this journey.

America was well represented. Hastings, Mary and the Hayards—Marney and Doris, Howard and some, both of whom had spent years building their space ship (though neither was yet thirty), only to meet with bankruptcy when the ship had been complete.

In the far corner of the room, alone, stood Howard, the man who had worked with Jacques for the last eight years. Before that he had worked in the Lyon Engineering Company, the biggest engineering firm in France, and prior to that he had helped Motter. Though now almost thirty years of age, he looked himself like a young man. That completed the ship's crew, with the exception of Marney. Mr. Mallheimer, was to act as a monitor on that expedition. He was leaving the world over for his stopped explorations of the last outputs . . . It was said that he could stand any amount of heat.

Sadness people, who knew his reputation, called him "The Devil." It was a name of which he was proud. He was never more pleased than when anyone that named him in his face.

The hands of the clock crept inexorably round. Howard's glasses at it became more frequent. Finally he looked at it, then signified to the conductor.

The wait of the drama would end to-morrow. Then the crackling book of the "New World Symphony."

Perhaps the noise at that quiet little village of Nastarre, in Southern France—the noise of the field from which the fight was to take place.

Savage, undisciplined, of people which had been created to break the bonds which had been created to keep them back, and who had used the offence by the singing of old ballads, the space ship gleaming silver, with the name *Progressia* in large letters across its side; the large framework which surrounded it, and the long, strong rods with which it served as a yard.

The faint light from his eyes which hinted at suspicion and intent, Howard, the old Frenchman who was not known by any other name, and who had no other interest in life than the machine, save, perhaps, a fondness for his master; Hastings, the American engineer, bringing a slightly nervous expression; Mallheimer, sour and smirking, and obviously unaffected by the preparations for departure, even though within the next thirty minutes he might be dead; Mary, looking wonderingly at Howard, for whom she had



# A Madman Found in the Space Ship

somebody conceived an aversion. Martin Baynes, quiet and businesslike, his sister, Mary, laughing and talking like a child going on holiday, and the others who shot living a fast word with them before they departed.

The signal for time was at first given, and by now the party of six entered the ship. The others dropped back to the safety line as the doors were closed.

These minutes passed—an eternity of time to the waiting astronauts. The world was flushed, walking. A hysterical woman screamed. The tense crew relaxed.

Suddenly a wail was heard—a thin note that rose to a genuine massound of sound as the ship accelerated to glide slowly along the rails. With a glow of expectation the crew leaned forward.

“Faster,” Foster. “Now it had reached the top of the hillside....” Suddenly with the staccato sound of the exploding rocket was heard....

Slowly, but with ever increasing speed, the rocket rose into the air to become lost and then to disappear from sight.

A roar burst from the crowd, a cry of admiration. Nervously, Tom left, the air lights died out, and all was darkness, and silence.... Silence, save for the yell and curse of one man who staggered along the road and shook his fist impotently at the sky.

It was Howard, and yet Howard was in the ship with the others....

## ★ THE JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE

THIS is the official statement written out by Hallsworth, according to the evidence:

On leaving the Earth, I, he says, was much astonished by the speed we were packed up. We had expected a terrible feeling as we fought against the Earth's gravitation. The pressure became awful, and I could barely raise my hand to look at the spectrometer in front of which Howard sat, as it curved out of shape.

Already the gauge registered 20,000 miles per hour! As I watched, it steadily increased to 30,000 miles per hour. The space ship seemed as if it were being torn apart. The metal crooked and creased with the immense strain until I thought it would burst and flatten out, thus due to Earth again.

Gradually the pressure eased, and was gone. I do not suppose that the rocket had taken a few moments to occur, but it had seemed an eternity. With a great sensation of relief the rushing feeling passed, to be succeeded by lassitude. With the departure of pressure, the pointer of the gauge had leapt forward to 30,000 miles per hour!

But even as I looked, Howard threw open a lever, and the sound of the rockets died out. Gradually, very gradually, the speed diminished. The passing of hours was notable with the silencing of the rockets—I do not doubt that my own was heating fast at the time.

I think that Baynes was the first to attempt to rise and walk about. He should appear as he had sounded about the room caused me to be shaken out of my chair, and jump loudly and loudly. That was strange. Mary then, the turned head eyes on me, as if she thought I was doing something desperate.

It was then I noticed the absence of Howard. The pallor of his face showed that all was not well with him. I had spent five years in a study of Anatomy, so I went across to him to see what was wrong. It was the strain that had affected him.

“Get me some water,” I cried to Mary, who was watching closely.

She brought me a small jugful, and I bathed Howard's face. Then a strange thing occurred. His mouth was washed off! My confusion attracted the attention of Howard, and he came and looked.

“That is not Howard!” he cried in a voice tremulous.

“Then who is it?” I asked.

No one answered the ban, but the girl Mary turned a look of understanding to Howard.

The man who was not Howard spoke to him.

“Are we on the journey?” he asked.

“We are,” I replied. “Who are you?”

The man laughed wildly.

“I have done it! You could not feel me!

I am...Mister....”

“Mister?”

“Yes. That is my name. Doubtless you have heard of me.” He turned his head to Howard. “So you are the man who has made a ship which is to travel through space?”

“Fool,” Foster.

“Why am I a fool?” asked Howard.

“A fool for attempting to travel to Mars.”

Do you not know the distance?” Compared with the distance to Mars, the distance to the Moon is nothing.”

“Life, but there is no life on the Moon....”

“What do you want with life?”

“What is life? Nothing. A dream.”

“Where is home?” asked Howard, angrily.

“Home is home,” Foster.

“Your friend is gone with him?” Foster asked.

“I left him and up to a house.

He will be fine now, and no doubt among the dead especially.”

Howard turned away. He could see that I was not so angry with him now.

I seized Mary. “What do you think there is on the Moon?”

“Strange things,” he whispered, knowingly. “Strange things, and gold.”

“Gold! The road kept from his lips with the full proportion of around six hundred thousand. Gold....” I looked at the others.

“What makes you think that there is gold in the Moon?” I asked Foster.

“Fool! I know! I have studied the Moon long enough, you, even when I was at that place where they landed me and told me that I was insane! I know there is gold in it.”

I turned to Howard, who was busy making calculations.

“Howard, is there gold on the Moon?”

“How should I know?” he cried.

I was at a loss now. Suddenly an exclamation from the girl startled me. Baynes had said the Diorama passed from the window in the rear and looking through the window he could see the Earth slowly whirling it against the Sun. At first it was a thin line, then the rays illuminated the ship and made the artificial light seem as nothing in comparison.

“What a living it is in the pit of my stomach. We were out in uncharted space, in a small world of our own, with nothing wild beneath our feet! Each movement was awkward, and several loose things were drifting about the floor.

The dazzling light of the Sun was almost unbearable, so Baynes closed the shutters.

Even as he did so, Howard opened the front case, and about before us lay the Moon, in glorious splendor.

“The Moon!” cried Foster. “Turn the ship from Mars!”

“Impossible!” said Howard, coldly.

“The pathway is uncharted out, and there can be no turning aside! This would mean disaster.”

“Do you think that I have just come from an elsewhere school? The old not to feel not! I have built a ship like this. I know the tree you are after. What about the recipe? If you like this at our side, you could turn the ship round if need be.”

Howard was silent. I thought of possibilities. Would any of these back me up if I suggested turning to the Moon?

Foster was silent. He was not to be so easily swayed.

“Are we going out?” I asked Howard.

“No.”

“Then we will arm ourselves first.”

The others had all by now recovered, and were going out at the door. Howard marched all the men except Foster with rifles, and to the two women he gave revolver.

Reluctantly, I abandoned the project.

And as we slid on through the vast gulf of

space—unconscious walking period after walking period, with the sense of death around us and the insecurity that a only fish is space.

At one time along the roadway was broken by our passing through a field of meteors which threatened to crash our little world to fragments.

It was a relief when we were finally through these. The things will ever be a menace in space travel.

To return the dull monotony which we had anticipated, we had taken a lot of books to read, and we also played cards. Thus we continued to while away the tedious time.

Until at last the Red World began to loom close beneath us, and our speed increased as we neared its gravitational pull. The planet grew closer. Along the entire circumference with its red, Everything here had now come to a standstill on what had been the front and of the ship. We ourselves were pulled to that part, and had to cling to the walls.

Nowhere there has weight, against a heavy case a waddles now from the front of the ship, and our speed slackened considerably. Another long pull, and another row of reds whizzed as they were released. Even as they left the ship there came a violent crash, and we pitched head over heels on top of each other amidst a pile of wreckage.

I just noticed the exploding of the light bulb as something hit it in that fleeting moment, and then all was darkness, and for the time I knew no more. The journey had ended.

## ★ DREAD SNAKES OF MARS

MOLLIEKIMER continues her narrative:

When I awoke from unconsciousness I found myself lying with my feet at the front end of the ship.

Next to me lay Baynes, still unconscious—the others seemed to be similarly unconscious to myself. All except Howard, who was about me, smoking to a valve of the side.

There around me who were awake, I noticed, were holding their heads in a way which suggested a bad headache. Doubtfully I realized that I had a bad headache, and that it was rapidly getting worse.

A soldier Baynes called the ship, and I looked again at Howard. Air was either entering or leaving.

With a cry Howard turned to us.

“Put on!” he shouted.

True enough, it was. Now we could feel it, reverberating over us in waves. Like magic, my headache faded.

Howard commenced uncurling the doorway.

“Just a minute!” I gasped. “Is that so? We do not know what there is to contend with on Mars.”

Howard nodded, and his attention to the view plates which adjoined the door. The red ones, which were now dimly over-head, had so far given no illumination. Apparently Howard had opened them when he awoke unconsciousness.

I joined Howard at the view plates on the side, and we gazed out on an unceasingly gray of red sand. Not a sign of life visible anywhere.

“Are we going out?” I asked Howard.

“No.”

“Then we will arm ourselves first.” The others had all by now recovered, and were going out at the door. Howard marched all the men except Foster with rifles, and to the two women he gave revolver.

Reluctantly, I abandoned the project. It was a silent world we entered. Biting was falling gently, save that doved almost as soon as it touched ground.

How hardly we fell! After being napped

## Strange Wonders of the Red World

we in the space ship all that time it was a  
trip to disembark. A shock was in store  
for us, however.

"Look!" screamed Mary.  
Under the glow of a cold setting sun a  
strange object was creeping toward us. Its  
appearance was something similar to that of a  
centipede, save for the fact that it was  
about eight feet long and more snake-like.  
It was the most repulsive thing that I have  
ever seen. As far as I can remember it had  
two legs.

But all the time I did not feel like studying  
what nature of creature it was. The  
thing was too close for comfort. Its jaws  
were already beginning to snap at my  
intestines in anticipation of a feast. As it moved the  
sand shifted, and in it was left a track such  
as a sand snake.

The Baynes gal aimed his revolver and  
fired point-blank at its head. It did not even  
have time to yell before it died, assuming  
the thing could yell. We had no means of  
ascertaining.

Hazard and Baynes went forward to in-  
vestigate the body, but I cannot say that I  
was particularly interested in it.

Finally, I looked to see if there were any  
more of the things about. But all was still  
and silent under the cold sky.

Then I paid more attention to our surroundings. We were on the verge of a desert  
which stretched interminably into the distance. The sun-setter pole was a very high  
tower—a sheer array of glass that was more  
brilliant than any on Earth. The strange  
things about this was their colour—the  
lenses were like copper.

Scattered with the trees was a profuse  
veil of leaves underground—sickly looking  
stuff.

A steady drumming was still heard,  
which noise of an could define. Far a while  
we stood listening. At intervals we could  
hear a distant cry of "Lac-tch! lac-tch!"

"Quick!" cried Baynes. "Back into  
the ship!"

Even as I spoke I saw the things  
approaching from the walls. There descended  
one of Mary's! Barely we scrambled  
into the ship.

"Now—now!" Even before we had made  
fast the doors the ship was surrounded with  
them. And the gloom of twilight lay over  
the world.

Finally with the setting of the Sun a  
wind had sprung up, for we could see the sand  
being eddied and lifted in places. Oh was  
it no form of life that was rising itself  
from hibernation under the sand? We could  
not tell, for the shades of night swept the  
world, and we could no longer see anything,  
not even the suns.

Hazard started round in the dark, seeking  
a ball to replace the broken one. In  
we were pleased when he at last succeeded  
in finding one.

With the glass of all the things round the  
ship dispersed. We opened all the man-  
holes and were able to see a fair distance  
around us. Overhead the sky was literally  
sprinkled with stars. All the old  
familiar constellations had gone, arrangements  
of stars this world.

A brilliant, though small object appeared  
above the horizon. "Deimos?" cried Hazard,  
rushing to the nearest view plate. I  
saw an astronomer, but his remark  
interested me.

"What is Deimos?" I asked.  
"One of the two satellites of Mars," he  
replied. "Deimos and Phobos are the two  
moons of Mars."

"Where is Phobos?"  
"It has not yet risen."

"Can you tell by them where we are  
now?"

"Yes, and more than that. But look!"  
he cried, pointing through the opposite window.

A brilliant object was rising, and rising  
fast, too.

"Is that Phobos?" I asked.

"Yes," answered Hazard. "Deimos

Mad with rage, Baynes  
swung his rifle and  
clubbed his way  
through the hideous  
Martians. The crea-  
tures fell like ninepins  
before his terrible on-  
slaught.



was in the East and Phobos rises in the  
West."

"It seems to be moving fast."

"It is. Phobos travels round Mars in  
just over seven and a half hours. I can  
tell you something more of our position when  
it is higher in the heavens."

"How can you do that?" asked Mary.

"This way. The satellites of Mars rev-  
olve over the equator, therefore, being as  
low in the sky as they are, we are not above  
45 degrees from the equator or we would  
not be able to see Phobos."

"Oh, I see," said Mary. "And when it  
is lower down we will be able to tell how com-  
mon we are on the equator."

"Yes," said Hazard. "At least, it will  
only be visible for five and a half hours."

I pressed.

"We ought to be able to get some sleep,  
now ready to increase. Can't we make  
the ship more comfortable?"

"Just what I was going to suggest  
being," remarked Hazard. "You will all  
have to hang on to something, because I shall  
have to fix a socket."

"All right, then. For now."

There was a sudden commotion under the  
deck, and the ship gave a tremendous lurch,

the levelled sand a spray of disturbed sand.  
The position was hardly ideal even then,  
but it would have to do. We made ourselves  
as comfortable as possible, with the exception  
of Garstang, who was preparing himself  
for an evening's star gazing.

Hazard switched off the light, and silence  
enshrouded the ship, broken only by the snore  
of Hazard and the occasional mutterings of  
Garstang.

Drugged with thoughts of the strange  
world into which we had ventured, it was a  
long time before I could sleep. Even when  
I did so, I was haunted by nightmares in  
which the Martians stalked persistently in  
endless desert.

### ★ MAN-EATING FLOWERS

MOLLIEKINER'S story continues:

"When I awoke the Martians were  
now breaking.

Garstang had fallen asleep, in tremors  
on the floor beside him. The others still  
slept. I did not know if the girls were  
weak, for they snored a different sort of  
sort of snore, of course."

## Grim Jests of Nature on the Red Planet

I shuddered intensely, and then looked out of the window. It struck me afterwards as strange that I did not look out of the window before dressing. I rubbed my eyes to make sure that I was not dreaming. The entire dream seemed to be alive and moving.

"Indeed, it was alive and moving!" Even as I watched, and the sun rose higher, I saw things coming out of the sun.

Imagine my amazement as I waited to see what they were! I turned and called to the others, and they, too, rubbed sleepy eyes and stared.

I was conscious of a name outside, but could not figure what it was, so I opened the door louder. First making sure that no masking were near, I flung the door wide open, and suddenly the air was full of a strange rustling.

At first I was puzzled as to its cause, then I noticed that the things coming up from the ground were responsible for it. I hastened to look at one near by, and saw that it was a plant.

The whole plain was undergoing a startling change. Dark unfolded and reached higher. The plants were of the same coppery hue, which was evidently the primary colour of Mars.

I turned round to speak to the others, and found that the women had come out, and Mary Lawrence stood behind me. She looked as fresh as a morning sun and my mother in Mars seemed as I gazed at her. My look she returned coldly. Certainly she did not give me much encouragement. My impatience must have marked her eyes.

I decided to have a walk round the shop. It was enveloping from fresh I felt. That was day, or 40 hours, to the smaller gravitation on Mars. The air was obviously thickened, too, it was like being very high in the mountains, only I had seen no mountains on Mars yet.

I climbed up to the top of the shop, and from that vantage point surveyed the world. But there was no such place to be seen from there. I could see that the deserts still seemed to be featureless.

Then something caught my eye, a gleam that seemed the property of water, and that was what we wanted if we were to stay any length of time.

Howard called out: "See anything?"

"Piss me the glasses," I said. "There is something."

Howard vanished, to reappear a moment later with the glasses.

Seen through the glasses, I could make out a wide expanse of water.

"Water," I cried.

"Good!" replied Howard, and came running up the side of the shop.

I noticed Bremen had come out. "Did you get our position?" I asked him.

He nodded. "Yes. I should say that we are about two hundred and fifty miles from the ocean. We are 10 degrees away from it, and I work it out in that distance in miles."

"Well, how about exploring?" asked Howard.

"You," agreed Bremen. "But we must be sure to remain behind to guard the ship."

"I will remain behind," said Bremen. "It brought it was decided to leave Garry and Dean Raynor in charge of the ship. I would not have minded staying behind in Garry's place to keep her company, but I could see that her brother would not have agreed to that."

Howard did not want the other girl to go either, but she had a will of her own. It was obvious to me that she was head over heels in love with "her Jacques," but I do not think that he appreciated the affection.

No one seemed to bother much about Mother, who was looking around us from

her padded chair. "Is he going with her?"

"No. I think that it would be better to leave him here."

"These things," said Bremen, nodding at

the plants, "are going to be a nuisance if they grow much higher."

Well at least now we were ready. Mother would not hear of remaining behind. For a start we decided in hand for the water. We intended to gather some in a bottle and take it back for a test in the shop.

It was not long before we reached the water and found 4 was a large pool, the further side of which we could not see. On one side, to go very edge, stretched the pools, and on the opposite side stretched the plain covered with fast-growing vegetation.

As we were examining the surface of the water for insect life a terrible swimming leviathan. We jumped on shore and looked up.

High over our heads crept a huge herd of giant sea and surface. Again it screened a desolate arena, and came swimming down towards us. By common thought we all held together, and with a splash the enormous thing fell into the lake.

An extremely quick change on the part of the vegetation drew our attention. The plants had begun to flower with large orange-coloured blossoms. They were glorious, and as I stood watching far away from me, used a strange small object to perceive the atmosphere.

It is impossible to describe the plants, as it was like walking on Earth. Suddenly the flowers were everywhere, as we could not see the jungle slightly down.

The surface of the jungle was very glossy, but we found walking was easier than it had been on the plain.

We entered the forest with some trepidation, for even the bravest would have had some fear of venturing into an unknown forest in an unknown world.

A long white cone faded somewhere, as if something was moving in the steps . . . and did not a branch of an tree.

Some bushes claimed our attention, and made us a nervous hunger. They were covered with a fruit which resembled an orange, but more glistening, fuller, some like was looking than an orange.

Without a word Mother sprang forward and seized one. But before he had sprang his intention he had his teeth in it, biting a very frosty of acidity.

Howard tore it out of his hand. "You fool!" he cried. "They might be poisonous!"

Mother said nothing. He just stood holding at Howard. Then he laughed weakly.

"Piss! Are they bad?" he cried.

That pronoun exclamation made us laugh, and soon the whole company of us were laughing. There was something exorbitantly funny about Mother's appearance—something very grotesque. He took another fruit off the tree and announced eating that.

"But the sensation of tasting these vanished from out that human brain, with the reverent progs of hungry tasting at us." It was too much, and I stared out.

The others followed my example, and for a short while we snatched at fruits. Then the peculiar behaviour of Mother caused me to stop eating, and so did Howard. Mother was looking as his face.

I had a sensation of extreme tight-headedness, and an innate desire to laugh at the top of my voice. A realization of our peril crept to me, and I cried "Stop! They are infectious!"

The others looked at each other, then threw down the fruit.

"You are right," Howard said.

Howard, I noticed, was beginning to look a bit foolish, and Mother started laughing.

"Piss!" cried Howard. "Do you see all the inhabitants of that world after us?"

"Are there a lot?" asked Mother, and a removed with laughter. There was nothing we could do but giggle, and this we did.

"If ever Mars is colonized by the Earth," remarked Howard, "this fruit will be a great danger."

So we left the bushes with their possessions

front behind and marched on through the jungle.

This new world was full of wonders. There seemed to be all sorts of conceivable and inconceivable plant life growing—a vast and abundant variety. One species had a giant blood-red fruit growing on each branch—from that was as large as a football.

The path of the forest which we were entering seemed to be all covered almost entirely to this type of plant. It was these plants that were the cause of the strange smelling that we had found—the fruit emitted within itself.

Soon!

Like a miniature explosion one of the things burst and flung a thousand seeds far and wide. Some of the seeds hit us, and they stung like insects. This was alarming, for if any hit us in the eye we would be blinded.

We made haste to leave that part of the forest. Quite often the things burst around us, and all the time the air was full of that strange smelling.

It became increasingly evident that it was getting late in the Martian day, and we decided to go back to the shop. It was as we reached this decision that we came to yet a new kind of plant life.

We had seen nothing of the snakes all day, for what we were thankful. And now, as we were marching back, suddenly the character of the forest began to change. The trees thinned out a bit, and it was either lighter, in the noon Asturian, we could see a vivid patch of crimson and gold. We scattered, however, and found they were flowers. My heart beat with excitement, for the things swayed rhythmically, and there was not a branch of any! Then I realized the impossible—there was death.

The flowers were dancing to music. Of all the weird things we had to fit on ourselves on this strange planet, surely this was the weirdest.

The second approach on Earth to this moment we had to the shadow camp. We realized that the plants themselves were running the music, dancing and swaying in time! In the middle of a wide step back, as if they had heard something.

Holding our breath, we were struck, and the heads of the desert turned towards us. A suddenly went out and right obviously—stabbed them! I have been here that we might be making a fatal error.

"Bull!" I cried.

We kept back, but the things seemed to grow and to follow us. Mother, who was still very stupid as a result of the fruit he had eaten, moved her slowly.

A flower attached itself to his leg, and with a brief he fell. We stopped and watched the thing, which had pinned him, looking desperately. In a moment or two fighting half a dozen or more of the plants, and Mother was being thrown back. We fought bravely, for the day was fast passing.

Howard gasped. "We cannot save Mother. Try to get free yourself!"

One of the flowers around a gap on my leg, pressing itself against it and drawing blood. I bit it viciously with my ribs, but the tendril was tough, and the weapon still off.

The pain was terrific, but I tore my leg from its grip, leaving a piece of skin on the flower's centre.

I looked at the others, and found them standing helplessly out of reach. Mother was silent, a hand still before drumming his, after they had charged him into the middle of the flower patch.

The flower I was holding reluctantly extracted their sharp, stony and fought with the others over the body of Mother. At least, they seemed to be fighting.

Mary stood with her hands covering her eyes. She could not bear to look at the gory sight.

A sense of incongruity struck the; a sense, say, a belief that all this was very silly and

## Men and Women Lost on Mars

impossible; that the whole affair was nothing but a dream and that I should wake to find myself in the space ship. But it was so dreamlike, it was stark reality and high time that we were out of this forest. With a look at the others I led the way, and soon we were crashing blindly through the jungle, haphazard in the right direction, and we never halted until we were lost.

There was no sound except. The plants had long since passed their flowering, and were withering their seeds. The whole place was covered with a tangled mass of vegetation, a confused puzzle of living and dead plants. These trees were falling as they finished blooming.

About a hundred yards away lay the space ship, and closer together at last in sight of home was more plumb than we were when we saw the ship.

"What are we going to do?" he asked.

"We cannot do anything until to emerge," replied Hazard, pointing at the sinking sun.

Many indicated the dancing flames, crackling noise.

At the sight of that, we were galvanized into action. The next ten or fifteen minutes we spent tearing up the plants, and throwing them as far as we could. The sun grew very hot as the flames crept nearer. But by the time they reached us we had cleared a large tract all round the ship. We cleared it and scattered the debris as the smoke eddied round us.

Soon it was impossible to see out for the smoke. For about twenty minutes they lasted, then a wind started to spring up. The smoke whirled suddenly, and finally was blown away.

The dead ashes on the ground were swept

so we could not equipped ourselves ready for a few days' stay, if necessary.

It was decided to leave as we were on board of the ship, our party was too small to divide up again. We would lock the ship.

This did, and eventually we set off on the trail of the sinking sun. I was a bit puzzled as to where the smoke had gone, but I guessed that they must be scattered on their halter, and sleep during the day.

We struck the trail the instant we entered the forest, for there was no masking the smoking of the crushed undergrowth. After following the trail for about half a mile, we got our first glimpse of a Martian.

It did not surprise us that there should be Martians, because it was obvious that some intelligence had captured our imagination, and we expected that intelligence in walk two legs and look something like a man.

But the thing we now looked upon like a man, yet at the same time it was a grotesque, distorted one.

Imagine the thing we saw. It had no hand, but it a body was in two parts, the upper of which was slightly smaller than the lower part. In the upper part were a pair of eyes set very distant from each other—almost where a man's ears are.

Attached to the lower part of the body were two legs, very thin and spindly. Above these were a couple of arms—stumps in the only word that will describe them. They were not arms. In length they were about a foot, and at the ends were split into two parts. Instead of hands there were just these two distorted, under the claws of a crab.

And that was the thing that faced us, the white it emitted a noise like "Ghagh."

We made a move to seize it, but instantly it started to develop our intention and sped away. I cannot say that it ran or walked, the thing did neither. It just hopped. There is no other way of describing the peculiar gait. It was unsteady, and the quivering that accompanied such a movement. I imagine that the creature is not strong enough to run, so it can only hop, and bound.

The path we had been following now turned into a broken track, and unfortunately we went down this, our rifles ready. Presently we saw more of the Martians looking between the trees at us. It was strange to feel that alien intelligence watching, and I wondered exactly what kind of weapons they had.

Already we came to an open space, and was filled with a sense of approaching danger, but could see nothing in case it was while we were crossing this clearing, a brilliant light played over us. Came a devastating roar as with appalling acceleration an electric arrow burst over us.

A black line across the sky, yellow sailing ship began to fall, growing heavier and heavier in colour.

White streaks of lightning snared our sight, and we hurried for the comparative shelter of the trees.

"It appears as if we might have to stay on Mars," said Hazard.

"Why?" I asked.

"If this lightning strikes the ship."

"Oh, it is not lightning-proof, then?"

"No. Dervish can't be made lightning-proof."



Across the waste we tramped, but never a sound from our god-mother or, no greeting at sound of our return.

But a snarl of barking filled the air, and on the distance floated a blue flame of smoke.

"This stuff is burning," cried Hazard.

"What about when it reaches the ship?" We shall be scattered with the heat of it."

"He will clear a space on that it cannot approach our enough," answered Hazard.

But in about all that we can do."

We reached the ship, which somehow had the appearance of an rusty brain.

"I cannot understand it," Hazard said.

"They ought to have seen as by now."

Then we knew that something had happened in our absence, for all around the ship were signs of a struggle. The doors were open, elegant at a hasty departure. Levels were signs of a hurried search and around things were missing. The staircase itself was a floor of the death of Boris Besser and Gerteng. I stole a glance at her brother. His face was very white.

### \* CAPTURED BY THE MARTIANS

**M**ARSHALL went on with his report: "The next morning found us all up and about as usual, signified by a worried Hazard to start the search.

Methodically we pursued our route. First, we should make for the forest of six thousand past the ridge. It was obvious that they would be in the forest, whether they were alive or dead. It was the only place they could have a use to or been taken to.

## The Fight with the Martian Devils

An abruptly as it had started, the storm ceased. The tumult died away, and the sky brightened. At the same time the Martians rashed towards us, no enemy to fight. It was a surprise attack, and the whole thing was over in a couple of minutes.

They picked us up and carried us away, then shot clipping us on both. I just had time to catch a glimpse of Haynes lying on the ground, very still and silent.

As we were carried, the sound of drums being beaten came louder and louder. The journey continued for a long time, and it was a relief when our captors stopped to down. I thought that we were at the end of our journey, but I was wrong. Our captors pointed to the mouth of a cave and indicated as to enter.

Nothing no where, we did as we were bidden, and entered the dark opening. Guided by the flashes and pools of the Martians, we were forced to continue along the tunnel. The faint light from the entrance died out, and we proceeded in total darkness.

Apparently the Martians had the faculty of moving in the dark, or they were so used to the tunnel that they needed no light, for they kept us moving at a fast speed.

But everything ended, and we at length entered a large cave, which was faintly illuminated by what seemed to be a phosphorescent light.

In the center of this cave was a pit, and it was from here that the light seemed to emanate. I looked over the edge, cautious, even though my next moment might be my last.

It was so deep that I could not see the bottom, but from a rise that glow of light. A horrible smell came from it also, and, consequently, I turned away.

Our journey was not yet ended, for once again our captors signalled us to another cave which led in the opposite direction. A dim light pervaded the tunnel along which we were now forced.

"Cancelled lighting," whispered Haynes.

The tunnel began to assume large proportions, and suddenly we were in a great hall. The walls shimmered with a strange bluish light.

With the passing of a hedge which lay one of the Martians, a door slid open on one wall, and the light died out of it. That gave me the idea that the light was artificial, and when the door was opened the contact was broken. I was beginning to have a respect for the Martians. They were certainly very clever.

We were ushered through the wall, and I took note of its thickness. It was fully three feet thick. The door had entirely disappeared.

Then the room we entered charmed my attention. It had an area of about thirty feet, while it rose to an unmeasurable height. I judged that there was some special bluish light at the height, one could not tell where the walls ended and the ceiling began.

All the walls of this room glowed with the concealed lighting except for the one through which we had just passed. The Martians closed the door, and the wall immediately sprung into light.

It struck me that there was not much chance of escape—the extinguishing of the light would allow the Martians, even if we knew the position of the vehicles, to locate all the other Martians who were in this room—the ones who were not our captives.

There were seven of them, and they were seated on a kind of raised deck at the end of the room. Calmly they surveyed us. Our captors were willing to them now—evidently it was speak that passed between them—and this resulted in two of our captives going out.

As they were going, some more Martians entered, carrying an axe. I took under my compact, and was thankful for the presence of my small revolver.

The seven bared out their claws for the

ribs, and each one began to extract them carefully. What I expected happened. One died, and a wall was plunged into darkness as the bullet hit it.

The sudden noise caused the Martians to scream with fear, and I noticed that they handled the gun very carefully now—so carefully that they put them down and stood them down a distance. Perplexed, they gazed at the blank wall.

My train of thought was broken off by the entrance of the two Martians with Haynes and Gertwing. I was surprised that they were still alive. The others greeted them enthusiastically.

I took a look at the Martians again. They were watching us intently, and conversing in low tones. At the sound of the conversation they came to some decision, for the ones who had explored so took us through another door.

We were led and followed into another room, and then the Martians went out, leaving us to our thoughts. They were not too cheerful, though we had something to be thankful for, and that is the fact that we are still alive.

And here I am, writing this, though I do not think that it will be read by anyone as I do not expect any of us will get away. If we do, I shall rewrite this note automatically.

How McMillan's narrative comes to an end

### \* THE FLIGHT FROM THE RED WORLD

**R**AYNER opened his eyes, aware of a vague discomfort in his back. It irritated him, as he turned over, and became conscious of his surroundings.

The Martian forest! It was a moment or two before realization came. He looked at the object which had provided his back, and was relieved to see that it was a rifle. A glance around him saw that it was loaded, and he rose, feeling rather hopeless.

Obviously he had been knocked out and then left for dead. His friends had disappeared, he noticed. He felt an indescribable black rage against the Martians, and followed the crooked undergrowth to where it joined the path.

On he went, back guiding him the right way, and master in his heart. And as at length he came to the cave entrance. It was very dark inside, but to a man filled with a lust to kill, that was nothing.

Unhesitatingly, he came to the pit, and reached down at the rock, vite small from its rounded base.

The illuminated passage opposite irresistibly drew his attention, and he entered it. The noise of approaching Martians came towards him, and slid with a strange and evillike glow, he gripped his rifle. Suddenly he met them. He just fired one shot, a shot that boomed and echoed from the walls, and ricocheted down one side to the other, and then he lost sight of his rifle barrel, and was shuddering his way through the Martians.

Under that dangerous weight the creatures fell like puppets, and as a moment he was alone, with the dead at his feet.

Scuttled, he continued his course until he once reached the passage end. And as it was that he came upon his friends. With two Martians guarding them.

The startled Martians had barely time to turn around before their leader stroked the face.

"Come!" cried Haynes. "The way is clear!"

The others, surprised at this apparition which had burst upon them, followed as he turned to go. They passed through the illuminated passage, and into the cave of the pit. And it was there that the big fight took place.

I would like to tell of this as an epic of a saga of brave deeds, and meet the Martians with glorious characters; and tell a

story of how lots avoided weapons. But it becomes me to tell the truth. When they reached the cave of the pit further progress was blocked by a pack of Martians. Before clearly the place was a maze of fighting bodies.

McMillan, with parted lips, fought like a fiend. To Haynes he looked the personification of the devil. The two girls stood by the wall, with one man in a semi-circle round them. And over the Martians roared out of the passage, snarled, . . . It was obvious to the Earthlings that they could never get out, at least, not by the way they had entered.

Hayward called out above the tumult: "Follow me!"

The others watched, and saw him dive for the entrance to another tunnel, and they ceased fighting in follow.

The way was surprisingly clear of Martians, which led the travellers to believe that it was a skirted off. But as they went out the exhausted travellers could hardly walk, and in a cave that gleamed with phosphorescent light, they halted.

"Where is Gertwing?" panted Haynes.

To Mary came a thought of the pit, a vision of a man falling down, and screaming as he fell . . .

"I am certain that he was with us during along this passage," said McMillan.

"It will be night outside," Hayward received presently. "We shall have to stay here until dawn."

"How shall we know when it is dawn?" asked Haynes.

"We shall be able to some some idea."

There was silence for a while, the party listening for the footsteps of Gertwing, footsteps that were silent.

"Sometime we'll have to guard while the others sleep," Haynes said. "Well, let us do two-hour turns," Haynes suggested.

"We can judge two hours apart enough."

"That is right," McMillan agreed. "I will do the first two hours, if you wish."

The others nodded.

"Avalon has need," Haynes requested.

"I will," answered McMillan, taking out his pipe, and filling it from a vase-depicted tobacco pouch. "I wish you gave tobacco here," he added.

No one answered. The others were already falling asleep.

McMillan hurried softly a few steps of "Liberation" while no guard at the sleeping form of Mary.

A sudden noise disturbed his slumbers from her, and soundlessly he arose, and hurried round the cave . . .

McMillan arose, and rubbed his eyes. The sun seemed to be out, and looked about him. Who was on guard? Where was McMillan? A gleam of light from slant dove his attention. He felt convinced that it was day-light.Quickly he awoke the others.

"Where is McMillan?" asked Haynes.

"I do not know," replied Haynes. "He should have appeared me after two hours, but he never did."

"We cannot go searching for him, nor Gertwing either. If the Martians have got them, they will certainly kill them than live."

Hayward said: "Listen, here they come."

The sound was the noise of approaching Martians.

"But we cannot leave them in the dark," protested Haynes.

"No, of course not. But do you not realize that McMillan has taken the only rifle, leaving us unarmed? We shall have to arm ourselves before we can do anything,"

"Because suddenly."

"We cannot risk fighting with the girls with us," Haynes continued, "and nor we shall have to clean up them."

Haynes looked up. "Is it possible?" he asked.

"It will have to be, for the Martians are coming."

## Can it be DONE?

Ideas for Investors

"Why not take that passage up there?" If we follow it, we may eventually reach the surface." "All right. We will try it. But I wonder where Malibeaure is?"

Baynard took a last look round the cavern and began to pack something up from the floor.

"Malibeaure's notebook," he said.

The Martians were close now, so without wasting any more time the party began climbing the path.

"A good idea," whispered Baynard, "that we must be getting nearer the surface. It is steep."

Higher they climbed, and at last the dry light began upon them. They found themselves in the jungle. But what caused them the most joy was the appearance of the pool, the blinding one which they had first visited.

"I wonder if Malibeaure were back to look for Gavatant?" suggested Mary.

"No, I hardly think that he would have done as without influencing us," remarked Harvard.

"Well, what do you think has happened to him?"

"That something drew his attention, and he went to see what it was."

"Perhaps he is but somewhere in the jungle."

"Or perhaps the Martians have him."

The girl shivered. "That will mean death."

"Yes, I am afraid that is well."

Now they were in sight of the open ship. Apparently it had not been tampered with.

"At least we have the ship left," remarked Baynard.

"Our first duty is to arm ourselves and find a companion," said Harvard. "But we shall have to eat something, or —"

He paused. The doors of the ship were open. With a look at the others he stepped forward and looked into the ship. But no sign of life greeted him.

Harvard went in and scrutinized the ship carefully. The others entered, and he turned to them.

"We have a very intelligent crew to fight against."

"What is wrong, Jim?" asked the girl.

"Our ship has been taken."

"According, also?"

"No. At least, I do not think so. But wait a minute." He went and looked in the large cupboard where the food for the journey was stored. The stock was depleted. Someone had taken food from it.

"Barnes," said the treasurer, "I am afraid of us not finding enough to last the return journey."

"Wait!"

"I doubt if we have enough for four. Certainly not enough for five or six."

"Which means someone will have to stay."

"Just us."

"What do you suggest we do?"

"That I suggest several of directions of our possibilities, but I get no other way."

"You mean that we should return at once to Earth?"

"Yes."

"But —"

"Earth. What can we do to help those that? We have no weapons, and we haven't much food. True, we can eat some of the fruit of Mars, but we might only poison ourselves with it. The only way is for us to leave the planet."

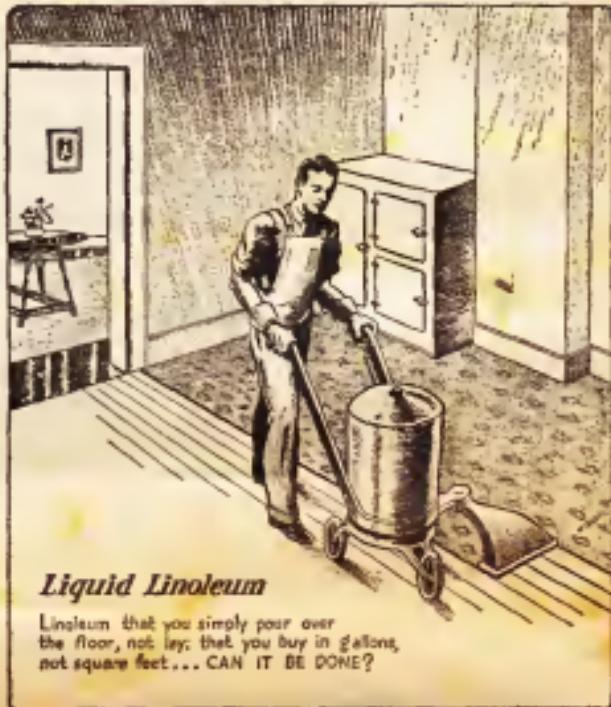
"And when can't back again?"

"Not now. That is, assuming we reach Earth again."

The others were silent. Outside the ship was a sudden noise. "Quak!" cried Harvard to Baynard, "close the doors!"

Baynard did as he was directed, closing the outer steel doors. Harvard also opened the inner plate by the door. Harvard stood a group of Martians clambering to get into the ship.

Harvard went to the controls, and moments the crowd of Martians were started



## Liquid Linoleum

Linoleum that you simply pour over the floor, not lay; that you buy in gallons, not square feet... CAN IT BE DONE?

Linoleum is such a fiddle to lay. Imagine if you could buy it by the gallon and "spread" it on the floor where it would dry hard in a few minutes! That would be a great invention. On page 365 we tell you how you can have YOUR floor dry quick.

by the explosion of volatiles and scattered in all directions.

The ship gave a violent lurch, rose a few yards, then fell again. Once more there was a commotion, and the ship moved about.

Then with a terrific roar it also rose to the air, leaving a great mass of churning sand, and departed whence it had come.

The world of Mars was silent. . . .

## \* THE WORLD GOES MAD

MARCH 1 of any reader will be unable to imagine the conditions which preceded the Rock at the close of its terrible London Disaster.

Was not an even greater danger—the certainty that could come with the others. The world was divided into countries or regions, each with a different Government and each with different laws.

And those laws were as if made to break. Corruption and hypocrisy were evident everywhere. Men, who should have been upholders of the law, were paid large sums of money by the few leaders so that they would not interfere with the activities of the lawbreakers.

There gradually crept into life a sense of panic—a blind sense of survival. Mobbed palaces and thrones fell to dust. In vain did a startled, wretched populace try to control the people and prevent the disorganization which was just but starting.

A madman gave notice to the Government of Great Britain that if they did not release Judge James as the supreme ruler of that country he would blow the largest city in Britain off the map. The Government ignored him.

True to his word, half London was shattered by a powerful and unknown explosion. . . . Millions perished.

Again came the warning. The Government took no notice, though threatened by an angry populace. . . .

Birmingham was half ruined. Then came another great explosion from the largest cities by their frantic inhabitants. A reward of ten thousand pounds was offered for the capture of the leaders, but as no one claimed it . . .

A third city was wrecked. Civil war broke out between the people and their rulers. After fifteen days of awful bloodshed, the Government resigned, and the king was informed of the country's misfortune.

Transplanted he came out into the open, and received frostbitten as Marchata, a famous actress.

For two days he ruled as an unprecedented and uncoronated King of Britain, then he died suddenly and horribly. . . . His most beloved wife died with him.

Blood unceasing pain swept the country, and with songs of war on their lips neighbor fought neighbor.



A Weekly Review mainly about Ourselves and the Wonders of the World of To-day and To-morrow

# Here's a SCOOP

## The Poison Belt

**HERE'S A Scoop!**  
We take great pleasure in announcing that next week we will present to you one of the greatest Science Stories ever written—"The Poison Belt," by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the world's master of Future Science Fiction.

Professor Challenger, the amazing scientist who discovered "The Lost World," is the hero of this great story. The world swarms into a stratosphere, or poison belt, of ether, and commences at Sunstrata, the tide of death creeps slowly over the whole earth.

It is Amazing! Baffling! Thrilling! There is bound to be a great demand for next week's issue, so place a definite order with your newsagent now, and make sure of your copy.

**THE POISON BELT...** By Sir A. CONAN DOYLE... In SCOOPS next week.

## Readers Want a Science Circle

**L**ETTERS from readers pour into our offices by every post-letter of yours, systematic suggestion, and, of course, a whole host making the discussion concerning a new phase of science or science fiction.

We welcome them all.

Some of the letters are from young readers—boys about to leave school who realize the important part that science will play in the world of the very near future—but the majority of the letters come from young men who have already taken their place in the world of industry and have had experiences of the tremendous advances and greater success in working in everyday lives. Men of ripe power and experience are also among our readers and correspondents. They have seen the rapid development of science within the last twenty years and therefore realize its importance.

In its popular presentation of science facts and fiction SCOOPS stands in a class all its own. Its critics and peers offer a wide field for discussion, so it is not surprising that hundreds of readers have asked us to form a Science Circle.

We ourselves have had the idea for some time. We had visions of a circle which would link readers together by putting them in touch with one another, so that a reader interested in space travel, say, at Liverpool, might correspond with a reader with a similar interest living at Fleetwood.

We had visions of local Science Circles affiliated to our central organization, these circles meeting for discussion. We planned special meetings of members to hear addresses by well-known scientists.

All these things are possible in the future. If our readers are enthusiastic and will support such a scheme...

What do you think? We should like to have the personal opinions of readers.

## The Readers' Page

SO many of you have asked for a Readers' Page, that in a page where readers' letters and suggestions will give the light of day, that we have decided to start such a feature immediately. Next week we shall

post a collection of letters giving readers' views on your interest.

If you have any ideas on science development or suggestions to make regarding SCOOPS, please put them down on paper and post them to us. The names and addresses of the senders of published letters will be printed underneath letters. If for any reason you do not want your name published, please write a note to us.

## Longer Stories

In response to the continued requests of readers, we have included a book-length story, "Cataclysm," this issue. Since our many have asked for longer stories, we would welcome the opinion of other readers on this new departure. One book-length story or two short stories—which will appeal to you most? Send a postcard.

Due to the length of "Cataclysm" we have been unable to include the story "Science of Space," which was promised last week.

It will, however, appear next week.

## Light Slows Up

CAN it be that the world will end in darkness?

The End of the World has always been a favorite "playground" for prophets, and

EARTH      1 SEC.      MOON      1 SEC.  
2 SEC. 9 SEC.      VENUS      4 SEC.  
3 SEC. 3 SEC.      MARS      8 SEC.  
4 SEC. 12 SEC.      JUPITER      20 SEC.  
5 SEC. 25 SEC.      SATURN      30 SEC.

Speculative chart showing how long light takes to travel from the Sun to each of the planets. The figures given are the actual distances in millions of miles and do not represent the speed of light.

on many occasions they have attempted to save us by some definite statement as to the proximity of fire.

But now there seems strong scientific and logical ground for a forecast of that fatal hour, and a few more years' observations will establish it beyond doubt.

The velocity of light is generally reckoned as approximately 186,000 miles a second, but far from this being greatest, various measurements show that it has diminished by 12 miles a second in seven years. At this rate light will have come to a standstill in 50,000 years' time!

Above we print a chart showing the time taken by the light from various heavenly



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hours to travel the Earth, and it will be seen that when the velocity of light becomes nil, it will be only just over eight minutes before the sun, our main source of light, will "disappear." The other planets will fade out at varying intervals, and we shall eventually be left in total darkness.

However, the velocity of light is the velocity of all electro-magnetic radiation. And if it slows down the whole material creation slows down with it and hardly vanishes out of existence!

Ninety thousand years...

## The Age of Sunlight and Steel

In the Village of To-Morrow, at the recent Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia, we were given a glimpse of the houses of the future.

Built at an angle to, instead of parallel with, the road, these houses that have two walls with a southern aspect instead of one, and are designed to admit every ray of sunlight.

Flat roofs for sunbathing, spacious verandahs, and broad sun-lounges in long bunches of sunbath when the sun is high—it seems as though there will always be a sunny side to the street of to-morrow.

## A New Wonder Metal

ANOTHER feature of the Exhibition was the Motor Show.

Glimpsing well-panelled and upholstered offices on creating new metal—"Stagelite"—steel-made the cables a truly unforgettable sight.

The steel is alloyed with chromium and nickel and the result is a malleable glowing metal, highly decorative, durable and absolutely non-corrosive.

## HOOTER FIRE

Its introduction marks a new era in the use of steel. Bathrooms, fittings, cutlery, kitchen utensils, fire-places, hospital equipment, furniture, jewellery are some of the uses to which it is being put.

## How Money Flies!

AIR-MINDED Londoners were given a little chance to make money simply by looking up into the blue a few weeks ago.

The organism of a Motor Show and upon a scrap-heap while there exhibited was taking place flying before it a huge double banner on which were the words:

"USED MOTOR SHOW. GUESS MY HEIGHT—WIN £10."

Watchers at the ground had to estimate the height at which the machine was flying.

The competitor had to write down the date and spot over which the plane was flying and then give his estimate of the machine's height.

On board the plane was a barograph, which showed clearly the height at which the plane was flying during every moment of its trip across London.

An accurate record of each day's trip was published and then "sighters" who were within 10 feet of correct had to claim. A prize of £10 went to the most nearly correct estimator.

# VOICE from the VOID

**I**T WAS NOT ARMS, Not an International Police Force that held the Nations in check and stayed the Sinister hand of War; but a Voice, a Voice that spoke out of Nowhere!

## \* THE SECRET OF THE PHANTOM

**A**ll the man yelled his warnings into the darkness and, bursting inwards, burst into the house, dazed and straightened up.

Broggermann, with his great organization and substituted supply of tools, had done what he and Mr. Bilsa had failed to do. He had located the Phantom Ship!

It was the task that had been given to Jimmy when he had first taken on the strange Secret Service work.

Out of a job a week ago, before Jimmy had consulted his uncle, Lord Broadwater, the Foreign Secretary, and as a result had been sent searching for a Phantom Ship that had been seen on the Easy side of the Thames estuary, and to investigate strange group of a Voice, a mysterious Voice that spoke out of Nowhere.

Jimmy had seen the Phantom Ship—a strange ghost vessel that came out of the mists and disappeared again into mists again. He had heard the Voice, too—*“From the Void that casts roaring fire from a thousand imagers in strange places and out of Nowhere”*.

Then Jimmy had met Arvy Bilsa, a regular old soldier, who was working on the coast for his Uncle.

A tiny cost of the wages intended for Jimmy had caught Mr. Bilsa’s knowing ear, and the incident had convinced the friend that Arvy Bilsa was “in” on the adventure.

Instructions had sent them to France, and into far Arabia, but now they were back in Dunshburgh, waiting for anything that might happen.

And at that time Broggermann had taken a house in Dunshburgh, too . . . Broggermann the warmer to whom the Voice had first spoken.

Together with the mysterious Mr. Bilsa, Jimmy had gone to the house of Broggermann and in the grounds Mr. Bilsa had suddenly, sharply disengaged from sight.

It had been clear that a man had run up to the house as a motor-bike, and had disengaged his garments.

“Who’s Broggermann?” I’ve found the Phantom Ship.

Jimmy saw the man going into the house. He saw one of the two shadowy figures in front move more, and thought he saw an arm split.

He stood very tense and rigid, knowing that the split arm meant gunfire. But the second of the shadowy figures seemed that split arm, no shot was fired, and the shot never shot.

The shadowy figure drifted off. Jimmy had a second vision of the house and began to think swiftly.

As he already been perceived, he was by no means the halfwit most people thought him and suddenly a theory which explained

the whole of his and Mr. Bilsa’s adventure within the grounds flushed upon him.

The shadowy figures were attached to the Phantom Ship. The great closed eye was also attached to it. Tom Faring, Broggermann, was a prisoner in the house, and part of the crew of the ship had come to terms him. It accounted for everything.

Now—Jimmy’s brain was working like lightning—these members of the crew were holding.

Jimmy could realize that the crew which crewed the Phantom Ship would feel and function, with all pleasure, that ship’s mystery. He might quite possibly have been that the attempted rescue of Faring was dictated solely by that desire, and not by any feelings of humanity. To make the ship free, indeed and always, that would be the idea.

“But now the enemy, as represented by Broggermann and Company, knew where the ship was. It was an essential to use Faring. What was vitally essential was to get word in the ship itself, that it might be used.

The intended rescue of Faring were bolting into the night. They had not need at the messenger, because if they had failed to kill him with one shot—by any means a certainty—they would have learned the fact that they knew he had arrived and what news he had brought.

But there remained Tom Faring, and, somehow, duty or no duty, Jimmy could not bear to think of the man alone in the hands of his foes. After all—and Jimmy realized it now—Faring had intervened in his behalf at Broggermann’s somewhat crudely. It must be admitted by knowing one the man who was following him and giving him a chance to get away unobserved. That act of Faring’s had born dividends, and Jimmy could have a debt of gratitude.

The confusion in the house speeded to the outside. Two big cars came roaring round from the back. Jimmy, snatched low in a twist of the will, saw me pack into these. In the foreground our own Broggermann and the motor-cyclist.

The latter’s machine was left lying where it had fallen outside the front door, and nobody attempted to pack it up.

He came, went scuttling away into the hushing darkness of the night, and saw Jimmy begin to get to work.

He looked into the lighted room. In the centre was a table, and on the table was a whisky bottle and glasses, some glasses and an ashtray or two, with the butts of cigarettes still burning in them. Broggermann and his people had been drinking and smoking while they waited.

Jimmy tried the window. It yielded his efforts. He took a big risk and, using his hands, jabbed a jagged hole in the glass, then waited breathlessly for sounds of an alarm. But it was more than possible that the noise of the siren had drowned the trills of the breaking pane.

He slid his arm carefully inside, avoiding

the dangerous fringe of glass, found the switch and turned it. A second later he was in the room, leaving the window still gaping behind him.

The wood sweep in and whirled the curtains all ways.

Jimmy crossed the room, opened the door, and found himself looking into the hall. His stepped into it and closed the door.

“It’s in the darkness, he heard a voice.

“Well, Mr. Faring, you gave us a lot of trouble, and I’ll say it to anybody. But this is where you get yours. What’ll tell us where the Phantom Ship is at?”

“I certainly won’t.” That was Faring talking.

The first speaker laughed.

“There’s no need to be heavy hoy. We know.”

Faring’s voice lifted.

“It’s a lie. You can’t have found out.

“It is.” Why should I be to you? Mr. Broggermann had a theory. He’d tell it you like him.

Jimmy stood in the half-interior. He did not fear being surprised. He guessed that in the house had packed off in his car some other who had been held to “deal with” Tom Faring.

The voice went on.

This was Mr. Broggermann’s theory, and he lived it out and it had up brought. All round the coast of England big ships are laid up—laid up in towns, not by side, with only a man known abroad. Nobody worries about these. Nobody thinks of going over there or looking at them. If one among scores of those ships slips her moorings at night and comes back before morning, nobody is to ask why or wherefrom. She needs no clearance papers. She’s a dead ship—and alone. Who’s she away in the darkness she’s not.

Jimmy knew this was right. All round our coast—nearly the pity—hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping is laid up in refuges, harbours and ports; secondary shipping which once was Britain’s pride, driven off the seas by depression and the self-sabotaged vessels of Germany, while her class British navigation works its whereabouts on coast lines. The harbours of Alfred the Great, of Henry the Eighth, of Drake and Nelson had been turned into the gateways.

The voice was still speaking.

“So we got the Phantom Ship. She was bought, but never removed from her moorings. It was just a bit of snobbery on the part of her buyer. He wanted a ten thousand ton ship to live on. He picked her up for a competitive sum. She was useless. He created a secret crew—of which you were such a genius. He got her running. She has sailed the seas by night. She is the Phantom Ship.

Tom Faring said nothing. His silence told Jimmy that all this was true.

The other man spoke again. “We’ve found her. She’s in a big cove near here where many other ships are laid up. She’s the most unusual ship of the lot, the easiest to move, the easiest to bring back. And—tonight—the Phantom Ship goes down!” He paused and added softly, “With all hands!”

Tom Faring cried out, but the other man clutched him.

“And now I’ll tell what’s going to happen to you. You’re going to be found drowned. Get that! Found drowned at sea. I’m going to carry you from here, put you into a little boat, take you out in the motor-boat and drown you seven miles from shore. You’ll never get back, Faring. Never. Come on!”

Jimmy opened the door of the room from which the voices had come. He saw Tom Faring tried a big curved chair, his ankles and wrists at the legs and arms of the chair. He was a big man bending over him, and the man turned and shouted as Jimmy came into the room.

The fellow’s hand shot under his jacket







